

SAINT PATRICK

A NATIONAL TALE

OF THE

Fifth Century.

BY AN ANTIQUARY.

Whay cracker is this same, that deafs our ears
Wit this abundance of superfluous breath?

Crack not, black angel, I have no food for thee.'

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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SAINT PATRICK.

VOL. III.

A

SAINT PATRICK.

CHAPTER I.

“ He feared not the number of tents, where death.
the mother of vultures, hath fixed her dwelling.”

Zohair, translated by Sir WILLIAM JONES.

Cha leigmid Dia os air ceann.

Agallamh Oisín agus Phadrúig. M. S.
penes the University of Dublin.

THE building of the churches had been carried on with great spirit, notwithstanding the malicious devices invented by the Lokite and others to annoy the workmen, and retard as much as possible the rearing of these bulwarks of Christianity throughout the country. In the king of Leinster, however, Saint Pa-

trick's scheme found a more formidable opponent than the Lokite, or even than the ambitious O'Neil. Kriomthan was not ambitious, like the chieftain of the north, to become monarch of Ireland, but he was ambitious to maintain his little kingdom of Leinster independent of the monarchy to which it had been made tributary by his predecessors, and it was this ambition which had led him to muster an army the year before, when this tribute was demanded, and, instead of paying it, to levy a very handsome contribution of black cattle and horses from the territories of the monarch, to reimburse his expence of fitting out warriors to maintain his independence. Now, this Kriomthan had at first favoured the Catholic missionaries, because he wished, like Logaire, to curb the power of the Druids, whose intrigues in his court had become not a little troublesome ; but he had taken alarm at the church-building plan, believing it to be a grand stroke at the independence both of Leinster and of the whole kingdom of Ireland. He was persuaded, in a word, that Saint

Patrick meant to make these churches an instrument for swaying the politics of the whole country, or that Logaire intended them, in a similar way, to extend his influence, which he—Kriomthan—believed to be already too great.

The king of Leinster was a person of great promptitude in the execution of all his plans, and he had no sooner satisfied himself that his independence was endangered by the erection of so many uncommon edifices in all parts of the land, than he resolved to put himself at the head of an army, and demand first a remission for ever of that detested badge of servitude, the *Boroimhe tribute*; and also to request Logaire to desist from farther endangering the peace of the country by church-building. He was willing enough to lend his encouragement to Saint Patrick and his missionaries, if they were willing to content themselves with preaching and singing psalms in houses and fields; but he was not yet sufficiently acquainted with these professors of the new religion, to consent to their esta-

blishment in permanent churches. Nay, so far did Kriomthan's ideas of independence go, that he was very unwilling to take such a method of driving his people to support the Catholics, by expending the revenue of his kingdom in church-building, and wished to leave every one of his subjects at free liberty either to join Saint Patrick, or abide by the Druids, as they had a mind. He was determined, in matters of secular policy, to support neither, and argued very justly, that those who had the best arguments on their side would finally gain the superiority. If the Catholics prevailed, then the Druids might make bonfires of their groves ; if the Druids prevailed, the Catholics might do the same by the new churches, which would only, in that case, be monuments of national or rather royal folly. These kingly reasons were unquestionably deduced, by true logic, from the premises laid down ; but, had the prince lived in these our days, he would soon have learned that those who have the best arguments for their doctrines are not always the most

successful in obtaining followers ; and I am persuaded that the church-building schemes of our own times will always succeed best where care is taken to obtain pastors with—*καὶ φωνὴν ἴσην ἀλλοῖς πεντήκοντα* *—a brazen voice, equal to fifty other men, with somewhat demure or gruff visages, some two dozen texts of Scripture by rote, and a plentiful lack of both learning and what went by the name of common sense some years ago, till Dr Reid, and the Scottish metaphysicians, gave that plain phrase so many meanings, that those who are conversant with these misty sages will scarcely understand what it now implies. In a word, the bustling, “ swaggering,” religionists of the present day—and I think this word *bustling* is the only one which can well characterize them—must have pastors to first fright them out of their senses with pictures

* Homer. Stentor is called a “ throat-performer” by Or Burney, in his *Hist. of Music*, I. 340.

of hell, and then restore them to composure, after the storm, with the joys of Paradise. Very different sort of men from old Chaucer's parson,

Who preach'd the Gospel rather than the law,
And forced himself to drive, but lov'd to draw.

Kriomthan, however, had no notion of a bustling religionist, for though Saint Patrick and his missionaries showed great activity in spreading the pure doctrines of the gospel, and in endeavouring, by gentleness and mild behaviour, to adorn the doctrines they preached, by the uprightness of their lives, none of them ever thought of *bustling about* to proclaim their *own* successful endeavours, or to gather themselves together for the express purpose of telling one another, in speeches of three hours length, what every body present knew, except that the speakers could have mustered up out of one plain topic so many words to exercise their voices on. Saint Patrick, indeed, was a great man in his day, if

Christian humility, and unwearied zeal and activity, without the forward bustling of hypocritical believers, could constitute greatness ; but he would have made a poor figure in a Bible or Missionary Society of the nineteenth century, and he would have come off worse still in a Methodist pulpit. *

* No man detests controversy more than I ; but, as the above events lead me into comparisons, I cannot help raising my feeble voice with indignation against the present gross corruptions of Christianity, and those vain persons who, by way of proclaiming their faith, like the Pharisees of old, make long tawdry speeches in Bible Societies, and throw their coin lavishly into the treasury. Nay, I have heard British merchants publicly bullied and braved by these "proud boasters," for not preparing such speeches, instead of writing up their unchristian ledgers, and for not dreaming of Indian huts garnished with honeysuckles ; and I have known their credit measured by the amount of their subscriptions. No one, indeed, is safe ; for, whether you are able or not, if you subscribe not, and speechify not, you are forthwith proclaimed one of the wicked, and damnation is liberally doled out to you, both from the pulpit and

The king of Leinster then judged right, from what he saw and knew of the missionaries ; but his jealousy of liberty in all things led him to oppose the church-building on the same grounds that he refused to pay the *Bo-roimhe* tribute, and he was now advancing with his army to expostulate with the mo-

the private circle. Ah ! ἡ γλώσσα σου—ἐλογίζουμένη ὑπο της Γένης. Even the starving poor of the land are unceasingly dunned by these harpies, and have their hard-earned penny-a-week cruelly wrung from them, as the purchase-money of salvation, and by those, too, who rail at the Catholics for presuming to pardon sins. And all for what?—to screen the vices of subscribers, to crown the managers with the glory of being eminent bustlers, and to league with our holy religion the spirit of the infernal democracy engendered among deists and atheists, which is so sleeplessly at work to embroil our tranquillity, Ω Βιασαμένοι τον ἀνθρώπον!—ἕκας, ἕκας ἀλυστρος!—Procul ! O procul ! Make not my Father's house a den of thieves ! Was it thus the divine Saviour and his Apostles spread the doctrines of the cross ? or is it thus they will ever be spread ?—No, no, while the fountain is black and corrupt, the stream can never be pure.

narch in the most effectual of all methods of expostulation. Logaire, when he received intelligence of this second insulting march, led forth a small body of forces who had been stationed during the winter in the Rath of Tara and its neighbourhood, not thinking that it comported with the dignity of a monarch of his extensive sway, to draw together a more numerous army to oppose one feeble tributary kinglet, who, forsooth, had presumed to set up a ragged standard of independence. The most feeble and contemptible enemies, however, frequently can give as much trouble as those of more formidable aspect, as the pious Saint Augustine thought, when he recommended to the African exorcists to begin with the expulsion of fleas before they troubled themselves with ghosts. This plain fact, however, Logaire did not discover, though he had more than once been taught it by experience ; and he thought that nothing would be more easy than the extermination of the little army of the kinglet of Leinster. The sol-

diers soon caught the spirit of the monarch, and began to entertain a hearty contempt for the Leinstrians, and this was not a little fostered by the witticisms and humour of Dranshogle, which were repeated from one to another, with many important additions of the inferior wits through whose mouths they were transmitted.

The Leinstrian army, on the other hand, had imbibed the independent spirit of their king; and, though they expected a hot contest, they were determined to return to their homes with the standard of liberty in their hands, or strew the fields with their lifeless bodies. They were not dispirited at the superior power of their enemy, which report, by the way, had greatly magnified; and they were far from feeling for them any sort of contempt. They marched forward with firm and manly step, resolved to conquer or to die with glory.

In this spirit they entered the Pass of Darrogh, which leads from the open country to a

fine romantic scene of hills and woods. In the bosom of this wild pass lies Loch Dar, a small dark lake, overhung on the one side with rugged precipices, terminating in barren rocky hills above ; and, on the other, margined with a narrow border of green turf, from the outer edge of which, a thick forest of oak and birch, intermixed with evergreen holly and strawberry trees, sloped along the side of a grassy hill, contrasting all the varied tints of verdure with the bare, bleak rocks that darkened the other side of the lake. The difference of the inhabitants of these opposite banks was no less striking than the difference of their aspect. On the green border of the lake were several small flocks of sheep feeding, with their lambs gamboling along by the edge of the water, and a herd of deer that had ventured from the wood to drink at the lake, scampered away when the army advanced, with many a pause and many a look at the intruding host. In the woods, the birds were at their summer song, and all

harmonized so well with the green scenery around them, that even the scream of a solitary jay, or the hoarse voice of the raven, did not jar on the ear, in the full concert of the wild choristers. On the rocky side of the lake, again, the tenants had a wilder look. A few lean goats gazed down from their native cliffs on the warriors, or vaulted into jutting more inaccessible to danger ; and the falcons and mountain eagles soared in airy circles through the middle sky, or swooped along the rocks above the lake, to protect their young. A solitary pair of herons, also, which had for many years taken possession of a lofty fir to rear their young, in the only island in the loch, contributed their uncouth clamour, and their more uncouth figures, in the tumult of threatening which their more noble feathered brethren had begun in the air, against the Leinstrian invasion of the Pass of Darrogh.

This airy clamour, however, and threatening flap of wings, did not make any impres-

sion on the invaders, and for the best of all reasons, they did not perceive it, having, at the moment it began, descried the advanced guard of Logaire's troops at the other end of the lake.

“ Every man instantly to the woods in as close order as the bushes will allow,” was the order of Kriomthan the moment he perceived his enemies. He trusted that Logaire's vanguard had not perceived them, for the pass was narrow, and only a few men could go abreast ; besides, there was a sharp turn in the pass where they then were that screened the body of the army from their enemies' view. Kriomthan was right. He had not been perceived ; and Logaire's contempt for his foe and his secureness of success had prevented him from taking the precaution of examining the pass, intending to get through it before the Leinstrians advanced. Kriomthan, in consequence, was allowed to station his men in the most favourable positions without being disturbed by Logaire's troops, who marched

tumultuously along the narrow border of the lake, as if they had been going to a boar hunt. When they had reached the middle of the pass, they were saluted by a loud shout from the woods, both before and behind them, calling upon them to halt.—

—“ Who dares thus to insult the king of Ireland ?” cried Logaire with indignation.

Kriomthan immediately appeared above him standing on a green eminence which rose over the trees, and accompanied with his target-bearer and a man with a large bugle horn, and answered the ireful monarch,

“ We mean no insult, king of Tara, we only demand to be released from the Bo-roimhe tribute ; and farther, we request that there be no more churches reared for the ministers of the new religion till we are better acquainted with their design.”

Angus, who stood near Logaire, whispered to himself, “ Odd, I think I might do war nor slip an arrow at the chap ; it ’ill steek his gab wi’ a hantle mair smeddum nor ony thing

they can claver back tae 'im. Heigh ! my truly, he's no scant o' impudence naether, tae come here wi' sic brow demauns !" and having fitted his arrow, he pointed it for the heart of the insurgent king, and made it whizz through the air, saying, " Tak ye that, ye sornin' riever it ye are ; I'm mista'en gin ye'll craw sae crouse whun my grey guse (so he called his shaft) gets a swatterin' i' the bluid o' ye."

Angus was mistaken ; for the target-bearer happened to perceive the hostile intention of the Caledonian, and caught the arrow on his target ; and even had this not happened, the shaft would not have *taken place*, as Kriomthan's breast was strongly cased in a corselet of bull's hide, a sort of armour which had lately come into use among the Irish chiefs.* The shooting of this arrow, however, became

* See Usher's *Primordia*, and Dr Ledwich's *Antiq. of Ireland*.

the signal for battle, and Kriomthan's bugleman immediately sounded his horn without waiting for orders, and was answered with shouts from the Leinstrians, who were stationed each man behind his tree, and poured upon their astonished enemies a shower of arrows, darts, and stones, which drove them back to the very edge of the lake ; nay, some of the less valourous run several paces into the water, it being rather shallow at this part of the channel. A second volley felled down the ranks of the troops of 'Tara as if they had been struck by lightning, and all were in the utmost consternation, for the foe was so shielded behind the bushes, that they could not perceive a single head to aim at, and sunk as unresistingly under the weapons of the Leinstrians as a field of grass before the mower. In the noise of the tumult, the voice of Kriomthan was heard crying anxiously—

“ Save the king of 'Tara ! Save the king of 'Tara ! ”

This order, peradventure, did save the

king of Tara, for many of those about him fell to rise no more. Logaire's troops seeing themselves standing thus along the bank like marks to be shot at, determined to rush at once upon the foe and die nobly, since they had been so blindly led into the pass. The Lemstrian swordsmen, who were not furnished with missile weapons, were already forming without the wood to receive them; and being already flushed with the success of their ambuscade, while their opponents were despairing and consequently rash, they parried their weapons so dexterously with their targets, and aimed their own thrusts so well, that Logaire's troops at last threw down their arms and begged for quarter, which was readily granted them; for the king of Tara was already a prisoner, and it was serving no good purpose to continue the unequal combat. *

When Angus saw the king a prisoner and

* Historical. See Keating and the Annals of Innisfallen.

the troops surrendering, he was standing on the very brink of the lake, and determining with himself not to fall alive into the hands of his foes, who would in all likelihood take inglorious vengeance on him for aiming his arrow at their king, he plunged at once into the dark waters of the lake, and the pretty Norah would have had to sigh away her future days in widowhood of love, had not the Hern's Isle, with its high and solitary fir tree, risen at the distance of two or three bow-shots from where the youth plunged. To it he accordingly swam, and every one on shore was so busy with his own concerns, that his escape was unheeded. Besides the tall fir which the herons had appropriated for nest-building, there were on this island a great quantity of rank fern and several bushes of furze and juniper, where he contrived to shelter himself till the night might favour his escape to the main land, and thence to Tara, to give the alarm of Logaire's captivity, and raise a sufficient sum for his ransom, or bring a fresh army

to his rescue. He perceived, after some time, that the victorious army were preparing to encamp for the night at the end of the lake which was nearest Leinster, and farthest from the little island of his retreat ; and he conjectured that on the morrow they would carry Logaire to Kriomthan's palace at Albhuin.*

He waited impatiently for the dusk of evening that he might execute his design, allaying his hunger by chewing the young shoots of the furze bushes behind which he lay concealed. The dusk came, and he made all haste to leave the little isle to the undisturbed possession of the herons and their long-necked

* Almhuin or Albhinn, pronounced *Alvuin* or *Alvin*, was built by the great Fin Maccomhal, the Fingal of the forger Macpherson, who, in his usual system of appropriation, makes the royal palace of Leinster to be *Albyn* or Caledonia. Nobody ever dreamed of Fingal being a Caledonian but the Irish emigrants of the Hebrides, who carried over with them the traditions.—See Gawin Douglas's *Palice of Honour*.

offspring. When he neared the mainland bank, he thought he heard something snorting in the water not unlike a sea-calf or a porpoise when it rises to take breath ; and knowing that no such animals frequented fresh water lakes, he did not know what to make of the strange sound. He thought perhaps it might be the deep breathing of a warrior dying of his wounds on shore, but the sound came distinctly from the water. Angus was armed with a good durk and feared nothing, and as it lay in his way, he was determined to ascertain what it was. When he came near he heard a human voice faintly articulate, " O Lord, I'm gone for ever !" and the smoothness of the water indicated that the voice had said true, for no appearance was there of head or body above the surface. It struck Angus that it might be the water kelpie, a particular servant of Satan's, which often imitated the voice of a person drowning to lead others to destruction, a notion that has withheld assistance from many a hapless man

since these early times ; particularly from a poor stranger shepherd who lucklessly fell into a torrent in Galloway, and was decidedly pronounced by the Reverend Samuel Rutherford, of persecuted memory, to be no other than this emissary of the devil, if not the old boy himself, when his congregation, just dismissed from church, were helping the poor shepherd out of the torrent with a rope.* Angus, however, was determined to swim forward in despite of the kelpie, if such it was, and the second stroke he made after this determination brought his hand in contact with an enormous glibbe of hair, which belonged, as he afterwards found, not to the kelpie, but to the head of old Dranshogle.

The affrighted humourist had not been extremely anxious to make one in this expedition, but Logaire was making so light of the Leinstrian force, that Dranshogle thought he

See the Scots Worthies, Life of Rutherford.

would be in no danger ; besides, Logaire insisted on his accompanying them for the purpose of exercising his wit at the expence of these contemptible foes. No sooner, however, did the shouts from the wood come to his ears to tell him, that these same contemptible foes had been cunning enough to surround them, than he bethought himself of sparing his wit for some more convenient occasion, by keeping his person at a distance from cold iron, which, when in the hands of an enemy, he found to have a marvellous chilling effect on the flow of his blood, and, by consequence, on his wit, of which, the said blood being the life of the inner man, was the cause.

Dranshogle, having brought himself to this plain conclusion, did not hesitate long about acting accordingly ; and, since he saw no better place of security, as the woods were full of Leinstrians, and there was no hill of bullocks' hides on the grass to ensconce under, he waddled quietly into the lake, and squatted down

with all the silence of an Indian duck catcher, leaving nothing but his nose above water, probably for the purpose of smelling from afar any danger that might threaten ; for in the article of breathing he had become wisely penurious, with the view of husbanding the little breath that remained to him as long as he could, on the same principle that sailors put themselves on short allowance of water, when they have the prospect of perishing for thirst. Of this latter, Dranshogle, as you may imagine, was in no immediate danger, but his stock of breath was diminishing with alarming rapidity, and if Calye Mulloy had been at hand, she might have ventured an unambiguous prophecy, (which, however, is out of all rule in the case of prophesying,) but she might for once have promised the fishes a good fat banquet of a week's duration, on the body of the squatting humorist. It is not said in my documents whether any of the Loch Dar fish thought proper to examine the body of Dranshogle, which, by continuing immovable for half a

day, would unquestionably have tempted the least voracious of their salt water brethren to have tasted a bit of him, by way of trying the quality of court fed beef. Dranshogle himself, indeed, was not quite certain, when afterwards examined thereupon, whether a large gash in the ham of his leg was the work of a fresh water shark, vulgarly denominated a pike, or whether he had come by it in pressing against the sharp corner of a stone in the bottom of the lake. One thing is certain, that how humane soever he might be towards the inferior animals, he was not so much of a Banian as to give up, out of pure generosity, any portion of his precious flesh to be fed upon by them, though he had no particular objection to their devouring as much as they would of the limbs and bodies of others, his fellow courtiers, or even to their faring more delicately on the blood and other fluids of the same courtiers, as the Banians of India above alluded to are said to permit and allow in their benevolent hospitals, for the better feeding, protecting,

and comforting, the creeping things after their kind, which are so barbarously hunted, persecuted, and slain, by *the species* * in other parts of the world.

In this state of mortal affright and watery surroundment, did Dranshogle pass the day, till the terrible din of arms was drowned by the death groans of the wounded, and the canopy of night, like a broad woollen blanket, had begun to fall over his wave-pillowed bed. But, ~~before going~~ to sleep with the shoals of eels and pikes ligging around him, he thought it would be no disparagement to the softness

* This word *species* is now, I understand, fashionably employed for the more obscure term man; and, as I wish to conform to the present taste, as far as my antique habits will allow, I have so used the word here, as also in Vol. II. p. 59. This note is for the behoof of any antiquarian friends who seldom read these fashionable works. The word *surroundment* in the next sentence, and other new words, in *ment* and *ing*, are of the same school.—GUY RIVERS.

of his couch, and the other comforts which he enjoyed in the lake, such as security from the piercing of arrows, the battering of stones, and the slash of swords,—just to take a stolen peep at what was going forward on the mainland, for the purpose of instituting a comparison of the said comforts with those he might expect on shore. He had just raised his head and part of his shoulders above water to put this purpose in execution, when he was saluted with the gushing sound which the body of Angus was sending forward in his progress through the lake from the Hern's Isle ; and imagining some water spirit, or some hostile Leinstrian had discovered his retreat, and was on the point of capturing his whole man, he forthwith ejected from his inward parts the dying declaration which we have already accurately reported, and, at the same time, in imitation of a wild duck when it finds itself under the nose of a spaniel, he slunk with a noiseless dive under the protecting water. But when he felt the hand of Angus making

free with the glibbe of his hair, he could maintain the struggle for concealment no longer, and his soul died within him—that is, the remaining portion of hope, which is the soul of man, according to some philosophers, a few sparks of which had till now lingered in his bosom.

Angus verily believed that he had encountered the dead body of some of his comrades who had died in battle, and thought himself bound to take him ashore, to receive a decent funeral with his companions in glory. He therefore twisted his hand firmly into the long glibbe of hair, which had for years been solely used to supply with warmth the seat of Dranshogle's understanding, and to hatch therefrom a daily supply of humour, of which humour, as we learn from a certain man of Ethics, the understanding or reason, as he chooses to call it, is the undoubted parent as well as of all other hitherto unaccounted for movements and productions of the human mind. This glibbe now served the no less important purpose of dragging the less volatile

part of Dranshogle to the green margin of the lake on which Angus safely and softly deposited him, *corpus sine pectore*. The treatment, however, was rather rough for the head of a living man, and that he belonged to that class of persons, of which he had entertained some doubts, he was immediately advertised by the painful twitches of the skin to which the glibbe adhered ; but a groan, which struggled for utterance in the belly of the captured man of fear, did not find audible vent in consequence of the numbed and contracted state of the conduits through which it had to pass, till a bunch of spear grass had the inhumanity to thrust its rough spikes into the gash in his ham, which had a speedy effect in delivering him of the imprisoned groan.

“ ‘The Lord be wi’ us a’,” cried Angus, recognising Dranshogle from the similarity of the above groan, to others he had heard him utter on sundry occasions,—a sort of *avagnorises* by the way, hitherto unnoticed by Aristotle and his followers, and of which the at-

tentive reader will find several other examples in this history. “ The Lord be wi’ us a’, I think ye be drown’t, man ; a muckle war mishanter nor the ghaist o’ the fat butler yet. How i’ the name o’ gude, are the’ a spark o’ life in ye ava ? I’m sure an ye warn a fish or something war, ye could never a’ keepit ae fluff o’ breath in the body o’ ye in aneath the lock.” .

“ ~~Hogh~~ !—~~Hogh~~ !—mm !—mm !”—answered Dranshogle, in the most articulate sounds he could muster. Angus, however, had too much humanity to sport longer with the poor humourist, and by dint of attention brought him to his senses, just as the moon rose over the eastern hills.

CHAPTER II.

——Nel cerchio accolto,
Mormorò potentissime parole.

TASSO, *Gierus*. XVII.

"Conserved to bring owte a deadlye darkness into
livelye lyght, the whiche otherwysse had been lyke to
have perischid."—LELAND'S *New Year's Gifte*—

ANGUS having succeeded in restoring the old humorist to something akin to life, began to think of securing his retreat to Tara, before the morning should discover him to the Leinstrians. Dranshogle undertook to accompany him as far as the next gulley in the hills, in the *driest* part of which he proposed to squat till the coast should be clear of danger, not being able to drag his unwieldy corpus after the nimble Caledonian, the gash in his ham, of which I formerly spoke, being,

among other things, a particular hindrance thereto.

While these things were in agitation, they were surprised with the sound of sweet music from the opposite shore of the lake, and turning their eyes thitherward, they saw nine little girls in white apparel standing among the cliffs, and each holding a bright taper in her hand.* The girls, however, did not seem to be the musicians, for they could not perceive any instruments in their hands, and the music was like the mingled harmony of flutes and harps, only the symphony was finer than any which Angus had ever heard, and it was so singular in such a place, and the uncommon sight of the nine nymphs in white, that there could be no doubt of the whole being the work of enchantment. In a little the music ceased, and the nymphs, after waving their tapers from the rocks three several times, be-

* Λογίστες ἔχοντες καὶ μινυρίζοντες μελῆ.

ARISTOPH. *Vespae.* 218.

gan to sing a wild kind of chant, into which at intervals they introduced mystic words, the meaning of which neither Angus nor his companion could understand. They were indeed so struck with the whole scene, that they were not in the best disposition for coolly unriddling mysteries. The whole occurrence, indeed, was calculated to produce a very extraordinary effect. The beautiful moonlight, which fell and twinkled on the dark waters of the lake; the high rocks which rose in barrenness on its opposite shore; the bare hills which towered silently behind them, and mingled their dim summits with the evening mist; and the dark stretch of woods which sloped from the hither bank, and covered the sides of the black hills, was altogether a landscape which no eye could see unmoved. Not a sound was to be heard there, but the remote fall of a torrent over the rocks at the further end of the lake. The winds were all hushed and motionless, and even the leaves of the trembling poplar had ceased to quiver, and hung

silently from the boughs. Then the music breathed such an air of paradise, and the song of the nymphs on the cliff was so sweet and wild, that our two water fugitives on the opposite bank could not believe that it was earthly. The white robed nymphs were decidedly celestial visitants, they thought, for the cliffs where they stood seemed too steep to be accessible by mortals, and even if they could with difficulty be reached, for what purpose had ~~these~~ nine girls gone there at this late hour? and how had they been able to produce, without instruments, the sweet music which floated with the moonlight on the lake before they began their mysterious song? Neither could it be the Rock Fays, (of which we have spoken in the preceding volume,) for *they* were tall in stature, whereas the singing nymphs on the cliffs seemed to be little, and, moreover, the Rock Fays never appeared after twilight. All these conjectures were by turns started and rejected by Angus and his companion.

At last they concluded that it would be the *Ghyllion, or Children of Evening*, a beautiful race of young nymphs who haunted the sequestered part of lakes and rivers, and hymned the moon with fairy songs, and tript beautiful dances on the surface of the waters which sparkled under their feet like diamonds in the sun, an appearance often seen when the little nymphs who caused it were as viewless as the moonlight air. Our fugitives were in haste to be gone ; but this was a sight which would have caused them to pause though their journey had been more pressing than it was ; for it yet wanted of midnight, and an hour's hard journeying would put the hills between them and their enemies. The song of the Water Fays, as they had decided them to be, seemed indeed to enchant Angus, as strongly as the Syrens of old did the Grecian seamen ; and had he been as early taught the superstitions and legends of that polished people, he would at once have deemed these nymphs to be of the Syren race, if they were not the "tuneful

Nine'' themselves, to whom so many brainless bards have often fruitlessly prayed for assistance, in the pangs of their poetic abortions. The Muses, however, are not thought to have had any favourite haunt in old Erin of the green shores, though they have sometimes taken unaccountable likings for individual worshippers. In these early days Ossian was one of those,—though villainously smuggled away from his native shore, and wickedly travestied of late by the Irish emigrants in Caledonia and its Isles. In after days, the poetic muse followed Spenser from England, to which she was carried back by poor Goldsmith, and did not again venture across the Channel till our own splendid age of poetic enchantment, when she returned on—

As rapid, as deep, and as brilliant a tide,
As ever bore Genius aloft on its wave ;—*

* Lines on the death of Sheridan, by Thomas Moore, Esq.

to transport the sweet singer of Erin to the smoke of London ; and as Homer says,

—ἐκ ἀποφῶλοι εἶναι Αἰθαιάνων,—

The favours of the Gods are never thrown away.

Angus chanced to turn his eye along the bank where himself was standing, and still drinking deep of the heavenly music,—when he saw two tall figures in white robes at a few bow-shots distance, walking with great majesty of air, and pointing by turns towards the singing nymphs. One of the figures gave a loud sneeze, which awakened all the echoes that the music had charmed asleep, and resounded loudly along the rocks. The nymphs appeared to be alarmed at this unseemly disturbance,* for they ceased their song, and

* I may be thought to have overlooked an ancient custom here, to wit, blessing God for the sneezer ; but it was not known in Ireland. It was a Jewish custom, because sneezing was from Adam to Jacob made the sign

when Angus turned him again to look, the singers were gone, and he saw nothing but the tall cliffs where they had stood, rising silently in the moon beams, and throwing their dark shadows over the lake below. This magical disappearance of the nymphs confirmed him, beyond all doubt, that it was none other than the Children of Evening, who had risen from their bower of billows in the lake, to sing their nightly hymn to the moon. He never once thought of reconciling this with his Christianity, for here was ocular proof, and it would be hard to make a man disbelieve the testimony of his waking senses, though religion should tell him he was wrong.

The tall figures in white, concerning whom he had yet made no conjecture, soon disappeared in the woods; but he was destined to see more wonders, for on the green eminence

of death. Jacob, when he wrestled with the Angel, obtained its removal: whence the custom of blessing.—
BUNTORF, *Lexicon Chaldaic*.

from which Kriomthan had addressed Lb-gaire at the beginning of the fight, was a great assembly of people standing in solemn attitude, though their dark dresses, their distance, and the feeble brilliance of the moonlight, prevented him from ascertaining who they were, and Dranshogle on the first glimpse of the figures in white had fallen flat on his face. These same figures after a space made their appearance on the eminence among the assembly, and torches were immediately lighted, and circular processions made with great solemnity. Angus perceived from this that the figures in white were Druids, but who the assembly were he could not guess. He thought, however, that he had now been long enough in bestirring himself, and raising up the prone carcase of Dranshogle, a task by no means easy,—for his belly was only about three inches less in girth than the butler's,—he got the half-drowned humorist hoisted over the shoulder of the hill, by dint of goading him

on\with his dirk, or terrifying him with the pursuit of the savage Leinstrians.

When they had fairly lost sight of Loch Dar, * and were descending on the other side of the hill, they were accosted by a voice in the wood behind them with,

“ By the blessing, I have a notion ye shud be some of our own people, you pair of travellers there, that’s, I mean, ye’d be right Tara boys, if it isn’t no offence ?”

“ O, that we are, I promise you,” replied Dranshogle in all haste, for the first sound of the speaker’s voice had sounded in his ears like the pursuing cry of a terrible Leinstrian ; and, when he was undeceived, he lost no time in claiming kinship with the accoster, who was no other than our friend Bryan. Angus followed Dranshogle with,

* Most of my Irish readers are aware, that Loch Dar has long since been drained by an improving proprietor, and is now a potatoe field. The Dar woods are also cut down for a similar reason.

“Dearsake Bryan, man, whar i’ the yiftk cam’ ye f’ae, bowtin’ like a bogle out /o’ a buss? My lug for’t, ye hae gi’n Dranshogle a bonny cowlin’, whan his capernoitie’s no owre the bizzin’ yet wi’ the sight o’ the Loch fairies that war’ speelin’ amang the rokes: It ’ll be a ferlie an his wits binna made out a’ thegeather amang yø, atween ae blellum an’ anither.”

“My wits, I believe, are as sound as your’s, for all your jabber,” interrupted Dranshogle, on whom the additional protection which Bryan could afford, in case of danger, had operated in a wonderful manner.

“Weel, e’en let it be sae, than, an’ had ye wi’ them,” said Angus; “but, ye ken yoursel’, it’s no that lang sin’ ye war’ a wee doubt-some, whether ye warn a selgh or a sawmont, when ye war’ squatterin’ i’ the loch, an’ took me aiblins for a blackfisher it was gaun tae ginle the chouks o’ ye, whan I harl’t ye out tae the stenners, as wat’s a beet o’ lint, an’ hingin’ your lugs like a drouket craw, or a braxy sheep at the deecin’.”

“ Bless my stars !” said Bryan, “ what was it took ye into the loch ; or, perhaps, ye might be driv’ into it by them spalpeen Leinster boys ? Myself was’nt much from being sarved the same trick in the scuffle ; and sure it wud’nt have mattered a dael, only had the king been saved out of their rascally fingers, when, och ! and alas ! he isn’t till this very minit.”

“ Odsake ! interrupted Angus, “ has he jouked f’ae them ? or ha’e they letten him gang o’ their ain gude will, trou ye ?”

“ Ogh, bless your heart !” replied the Hibernian, “ in troth they did just let him go ; only they made him swear a terrible great oath, by all the gods and devils that ever were know’d in Ireland, and by the sky above him, and all the stars in it, and by them Dar mountains, and the rocks and woods on them, and by a dael of other terrible things known’st to themselves, * that he wud’nt never ax a ha’p’-

* See the particulars of this savage oath in Jocelin, Vit. Sancti Patricii, and O’Connor’s Keating, in the reign

orth of the Boroinhe tribute, nor ever be axing them to build churches or turn Catholics, saving they wud think proper themselves. And to be sure he swore it every inch ; and there's to be paece between us and the Leinster boys, till once't they be after breaking it again."

"Aweel, awcel," said Angus, "tae himsel' be 't said, g̃m he ha'e renunce't his salvation tae save his life, by takin' pairt in sic heathenish deevilry : but it's muckle a man 'ill do tae save his life an he sud gang the braid wey at the hinner en'. I'm jealousin' it wud be the vile pagan warlocks an' him it we saw on the height aboon the trees. It was a sign there was something no canny on the pins, whun the Loch fairies war' sing-

of Leogaire. *Εστιν ὃ το ὅπως τινα ὁμοσαι μεγα, το δε πη, και πως, και ἐφ' ὧν καιρων, και τινος ἐνεκα* :—that is, Though an oath of itself be not sublime, the circumstances of time and place may make it so.—Longin. de Sublim. 16.

in' their sangs tae the mune, owre amang the cleavin's o' the rokes ; but sic a thing as that deev'lich aith wad ne'er ha'e come i' *my* head."

" Dear ! and did ye sae them fairies on the rocks ?" said Bryan ; " d'ye know, it was them very cratures that frightened the king to swear, for them villains o' Druids went down to the side of the loch to houl' a consultation with them, and intarpurted the song to their own mind, I have a notion. Blame me ! but I wud like to have a touch at them ; one of the spalpeens looked uncommon like the villain in Connaught that was the killing of my Evelyn ; that I'll never forget if I shud die to-morrow."

" Eh ?—are ye sure o' that ?" said Angus. " Odd, an we cou'd get but ae meenit o' him i' the wud here, it wadna be ill dunc tae gi'e his craig a chirt." Angus was anxious thus to recommend himself to Norah's father, because he knew Bryan was not over satisfied with his Caledonian extraction.

“ By dad ! ” said Bryan, “ I was sure ye wudn’t stan’ to give me a trifle of help to revenge my Norah’s mother on the villain ; and I have larn’t that this is the very road they eom’d, and their grove is only a little over’ster before us, so if we’d just be waiting a bit—”

“ O Lord ! no,” cried Dranshogle, who had been silent during the rest of the conversation, but thought it his cue now to thrust in a negative against murder, particularly as he thought his own person might come by disaster in the fray.

“ Haud your gumptionless tongue, man,” said the Caledonian, “ or we’ll maybe stap ane o’ the white-goun’t gentry in that muckle kyte o’ yours ; an’ he’ll no be lang o’ dingin’ a sowp o’ the loch water out o’t, I’se warrent ’um.”

It was settled, accordingly, in opposition to Dranshogle, that they should lie in wait for the return of the Druids, whose residence Bryan had been rightly informed of—nor was he wrong as to the identity of the Connaught

Druid, who had shifted his dwelling in consequence of the success of the missionaries in that district ; for though Cennaught was in a rude state and Saint Patrick himself had been maltreated when he first attempted to expound his faith there, the efforts of the Catholics had overcome every difficulty, and Cennaught was not now behind any part of the island in its acceptance of Christianity.

The country around Loch Dar was indeed an admirable situation for a Druid residence. Its wildness, and its woods, and the little dark lake, and the rugged precipices beyond it, were all in unison with their mysteries and the solitude which they coveted and courted. Of their admirable management in striking their votaries with superstitious wonder, we have just seen a marked instance ; for the nymphs in white who sung from the rocks, and the sweet music on the lake, were not, as we may well imagine, supernatural appearances. They were all the skillful and cunning devices of these Druids, whom the success of

the Catholics were driving to use every possible plan to uphold the tottering fabric of their faith.

These nymphs, whose appearance and whose singing were so wonderful, had been educated for the express purpose of personating the Children of Evening, the belief of whose nightly songs and dances to the moon was so universal in the country ; and for exhibiting this fairy spectacle to advantage, the Druids had a concealed cavern in the rocks where the girls could appear and disappear at pleasure, and which served besides for the hiding place of unseen musicians. The capture of Logaire and his army in their very neighbourhood was an event which they were extremely anxious to take advantage of, and the girls were dispatched by a rout over the mountains, only known to themselves, to hold themselves in readiness, and they had arrived at the cavern about the dusk of evening.

By this time Logaire had consented so far to give up his Christianity, as to take the oath

which had been introduced by the Druids, and these priests having been sent for to superintend the ceremony of administering it, lost no time in putting the machinery in order, which we have seen was played off with much effect. It was lucky for them that they died so, for before Logaire reached the eminence in the wood, which may, without impropriety, be called the Mount of the Covenant, his conscience smote him sorely for relinquishing his faith in Christ, and submitting to take so terrible a pagan oath. The Druids, however, told him that he could not now recede, for they had called the assistance of the invisible powers to be witnesses, and to convince him that they had power over the world of spirits, they made a pretence of incantation, during which they gave the nymphs the signal agreed on to appear. The splendid apparition of the nine girls in white, and their waving lights and the sweet music, were such convincing arguments, that Logaire hesitated no longer, and requested the Druids to go down to the mar-

gin of the lake to consult them, for the Mount was too distant for them to hear the words of the song, and the Druids said that nobody must go nearer the Ghyllion except a consecrated person, under pain of death. This accounts for what had been seen by Angus and Dranshogle.

The ambuscaders had not remained long in their lurking place, when the two Druids who had performed the ceremony of the oath, advanced through the wood in close conversation. Bryan was impatient to "have a hit at the tall one," but Angus kept him back till they should overhear what was the subject of their discourse. They could not hear the whole distinctly ; but they heard enough to dispel the illusion of the Children of Evening, for one of the Druids said,—“ Did not our little girls act their part to admiration on the rocks ?” “ Indeed they did,” answered his companion, “ and deserve to be rewarded for it.” “ And the two kings,” rejoined the other, “ believed it was the Ghyllion as firm-

ly as that you is the moon in the sky.”
“ Well, how easily some people are duped !”
observed his companion.

“ Amen,” roared Angus, from a black bush behind them, in a tremendous voice, emitted through the tube of his closed fist;
“ You maun gang wi’ me, now, ye brave deceivers, and get your rewards.”

“ Help me !” said one of the Druids in a low quivering voice, “ it’s the devil himself : What will we do ?—I always heard he abode in Albion, and it spoke broad Scotch : what will we do ?”

At this moment Angus and Bryan rushed behind them, and quickly blindfolded them with their own robes. Angus, indeed, had guessed that his speech would operate upon them as it had effectually done, and he proposed to Bryan in a whisper to blindfold them and carry them to Tara, where the exposure of their deceptions would both gratify his revenge, and by undeceiving the king, would tend to further the Christian cause which

Bryan had so heartily joined his enterprise to aid. They, accordingly, bound their hands, and began to set forward on their journey, Angus's dirk being again of use by way of goad to prick on the captured Druids, who were at a loss to conjecture whether the weapon did not make some portion of the devil's head, or whether their tormentors might not after all be of the human species. Dranshogle, notwithstanding his former fears, and the painful wound in his ham, and worse than all —“*fame rabida guttura pandens,*” *—enjoyed the jest so much, that he could scarcely keep from laughing aloud, a thing which he never did in the case of his own jokes, knowing how much it lessened their effect in others, and he waddled on in high glee, his portly belly going prologue, and jogging from one side to another like the broad face of a college professor chuckling over a savoury Christmas goose, or an immense bear ham dangling at the poop of a Greenland whale-boat.

* *Æneid*. VI.—Hunger raging in his throat.

By taking certain near cuts, not easily passible by a whole army, they reached Tara before their companions, whom the Leinstrians had released in consequence of Logaire's oath. Here they were met by the mischief-making Lokite, who had contrived to be left out of the expedition that he might practise his infernal plan upon the young princess, in which, however, he had as yet been happily unsuccessful. The capture of the Druids, and the feints which Angus and Bryan had successfully put upon them to make them believe that they were in the hands of the invisible agents of darkness, with whom their consciences accused them of having so often tampered, were circumstances which would not have saved them from the wicked pranks of the Lokite had they been his own brothers. He speedily got over his animosity to Angus, and also his connection with the Druidical party, and thought of nothing but how to get the most sport out of this precious priestly prize.

By his advice, accordingly, they were for the present lodged in a dungeon, where every species of annoyance was practised upon them, till—*they*—they roared most hideously, a sort of vocal music in which the same Lokite took particular delight. A subterranean hall was in the mean time lighted up for their reception, with the addition of horrible instruments of torture scattered about, and figures dressed in the most fiendish manner they could invent. When the king arrived he was invited to be present at this scene of diablerie, being unfortunately nearly concerned in certain disclosures which the Lokite, by personating his satanic majesty, found means to extort from the terrified Druids. In short, Logaire found that he had been miserably duped into the swearing of the terrible oath, and he soon resolved to abide by it no longer than he could collect a fresh army. “The rascally Druids,” as Bryan called them, were forthwith condemned by the king in person, whose ungovernable rage

soon opened their eyes to the nature of the Lokite's mock tribunal ; and they were properly punished for their daring and blasphemous crime, to the great satisfaction of Bryan, who now saw the man who had persecuted his dear Evelyn justly rewarded for his tyranny and deceit.

. ——— ——— Periere latebræ
Tot scelerum.—LUCAN, iv. 192.

CHAPTER III.

And its next to Scotland we will come,
With its bonny glens and fountains,
Its misty cluds, and its spreading wuds,
Its lochs, and snaw-clad mountains.

Old Song.

WHILE the Christian cause was thus struggling through difficulties in the south, which would have deterred from farther exertion any set of men less zealous than Saint Patrick and his undaunted associates, O'Neil and the Druids in the north were arranging plots, whose execution, if successful, would at once annihilate the Apostle's mission, and drive the reigning family from the throne. The interruption of the nuptial ceremony by the unexpected appearance of Jenny Grougar, chagrined him beyond measure ; but he had no

alternative ; he must either submit to the Druidic superstitions, or at once throw off their yoke, and this his plans did not advise him to do. He heard with vexation the accounts of the church-building scheme, which Saint Patrick was wisely exerting all his zeal and influence to forward ; and intelligence of Kriomthan's movements had likewise reached him ; but he did not relish a coalition with this champion of independence, although he saw the advantage it would give him as a diversion to weaken Logaire's force, should it be attacked both by the Leinstrians and his own clan at the same time. His troops had of late been strongly reinforced by the exertions of his Druidical friends, all of whom in every part of the island looked up to him as the champion of their waning religion, by whose success they must stand or fall. Kriomthan's notions of independence of thinking and liberty of conscience were worse in their eyes than Logaire's open protection of the Catholics. The ministers of religion must

have all or none : the toleration of others who differ from them is a crime which God, they think, can never pardon, and it hence becomes their duty to persecute all such with fire and sword if they can ; if the state disallows of this, by anathemas and cursing, and consigning without mercy all who smack not of their catch-words and their slang to the

ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

Hence arises, and will for ever arise in the present order of things, the pitiful religious bickerings and jarrings of sects and parties, even in our own blessed country, where the government has so wisely shackled the hands of bigotry from rearing her stakes and her gibbets to terrify the people into motley schemes of salvation, a spectacle which I have no doubt we would not fail to see even to-morrow, did our glorious toleration not crush in pure humanity this fiendish spirit of our

fallen nature, which reigns in the bosoms of *every religious party* under heaven.*

By means, therefore, of the exertions made by the ministers of the tottering religion, O'Neil saw himself at the head of a formidable band of warriors prepared to support the Druid cause against Catholic encroachment, or to sacrifice their lives in the attempt. In all cases, those who die in support of a religion are promised the inheritance of paradise, whether they are martyred at stakes and gibbets, or fall in the field of battle ; and in the present case the Druids had been so liberal of their promises of heaven to these rebel warriors, that they were quite reckless of life, and impatient to rush on the Christian army.

Spiritus intus alit ; totumque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

ÆNEID. vi.

————— one common soul

Inspires, and feeds, and animates the whole.

DRYDEN.

So far all was well ; but O'Neil, with all this fair prospect before him, had still many doubts and misgivings, and could not trust the Druids so unreservedly as their zeal might have led him to do. He still wished to have some stronger chain to bind them to his interest, and lamented that their idle superstitions still prevented his union with the fair Ethne, whose influence would unalterably rivet the whole Druidical party to his fortunes. These thoughts kept still lingering and hankering in his mind the wish to consult the sage Merlin, which the prospect of being speedily united to the Druidess had tended for a while to lull ; and day after day had passed on after the unlucky festival without his claiming the promise young Fergus had made him of being his ambassador in this momentous affair. M'Gurdie, who had a great deal of cunning under a plain exterior, had successfully introduced himself, and had been soon found qualified to act in the capacity of a guide to the noble youth, intending to make

such good use of his appointment that Fergus should return to Ireland, if not a confirmed Catholic, at least with favourable views of Christianity, a purpose he for the present carefully and wisely concealed. When Ethne's return to the grove had prevented the expedition, M'Gurdie, notwithstanding his pretended impatience to get home to Caledonia, was prevailed on by O'Neil to remain at Rath-na-Carraig for some time to see how matters would fall out, the chief having an abiding habit of distrust continually haunting him, even in his hey-day of expectations.

Time, which moves onward without a pause amidst the contentions and tumults of men, had now brought "the pleasant summer back again," and with it the noise of warlike preparation to overturn the new religion, and establish a Druidical monarch on the throne of Tara in the person of Erc O'Neil, when young Fergus was dispatched with all secrecy to Caledonia under the guiding of the cunning M'Gurdie, to ascertain what the

Fates had decreed concerning the event of the war. This voyage, no doubt, was rather a wild one, but the mind of O'Neil had been so long set upon it, that he deemed it to be of as much importance almost as a successful battle ; and one of his leading reasons for this was unquestionably good, namely, that Merlin being unconnected with Ireland, would have no motives to deceive him by giving a false response.

The adventurers accordingly set sail from Cushendun with a clear sky and a fair wind, and were soon off the mouth of Loch Ryan, which lies embosomed among the barren rocks of the coast of Galloway, stretching into a fine inland bay securely sheltered from storms.

“ That deep glen,” said McGurdie to Fergus, “ that ye see breakin’ in frae the shore tae the nor’ard o’ Loch Ryan, and rinnin’ away up amang the heathery hills wi’ the sides o’ the braes a’ green wi’ hazel busses, an’ yon blue mist steaming up frae the burn i’ the hallow o’t’”—

“Well, what of it? I see what you mention,” said Fergus.

“Yon’s Glenapp, the bonniest glen in a’ Galloway; an’ a bit mair rife o’ fallow deer an’ braw nits ye’ll no fin’ atween’t and the Mull.”

“The Mull of Kintyre ye mean, I suppose,” said Fergus with some archness, in order to ensnare his guide.

“Ou na,” replied M’Gurdie, “ye maunna think ta’e trap me that gate naether, whun ye see there’s no sae muckle’s a brae nor a breakan, let abee a deer or a nit buss, atween us an’ Kintyre; it was the lang Mull o’ Galloway I was thinkin’ o’.”

Fergus was delighted with the rude wildness of the Galloway shores, though his delight arose rather from the association of their close resemblance to the eastern coast of his native Ulster than to the grandeur of the view.

“And there is Rath-na-Carraig, I declare,” cried he with youthful joy, as Ailsa

Crag, the Teneriffe of the Firth of Clyde, rose out of the sea towards the north. The mountain ridge of Arran, however, soon drew all his attention from this comparison, which was very natural and very pleasant to a youth who had never before been out of his father's territories. Fergus had from his youth been fond of the sublime and the grand in the works of nature, because these harmonized with his own lofty aspirings; and his favourite haunt had been on the summit of the tremendous cliffs of Pleaskin, on which he often took his solitary walk when the winds had darkened into a tempest, and the voice of the waves filled the wide hemisphere of the air with dread. Then indeed he was overawed by the terrible grandeur, which walked through the storm as if the unseen God had passed by in his wrath, and sent his vengeance abroad on the ocean; yet this was a scene which he would not have foregone for all the beauties and the warbling of birds, and the sweet sunshine of a summer's morning. His young

spirit seemed to draw life from the coming storm ; and when the thunder broke, and the winds arose, and the dark sea boiled into foam, he was awed and charmed with sublime delight.

But he had not till now seen the grandeur of a ridge of mountains like Arran, heaving their peaks through the mid air like the blue ruins of a summer cloud which the winds have strewed on the horizon ; and his spirits bounded and his heart leapt with gladness as if he had been coasting on the territories of the blessed, and had caught a glimpse of the walls of paradise. Such are the emotions of young ambition, which youths of ordinary clay, and the sober dulness which sleeps on the souls of the mass of men, can never feel. *Their* eyes are ingloriously led captive by the tinsel glittering of gold and silver, and their appetites, by the troughs, rank with gratification which smoke on their boards, while youths like Fergus soar in fancy through the magnificence of nature, and send their souls abroad

on the mountains and on the ocean, and through the starry sweep of the universe, where alone they can find a dwelling and a home.

The mountain scenery of Scotland, of which he now saw in the rugged island of Arran, only a shattered fragment which had been torn from the Grampian range in the days of old by the fury of the floods or the convulsion of earthquakes, was a spectacle which their future monarch could not behold, and not feel his soul swell with high aspirations; and he was no less enraptured with the variety of land and sea which lay in the distance where the Clyde floats down its waters to the ocean through a broken rampart of hills, and rolls in majesty around the bays and the islands of the Firth. It was a scene wholly new to him to

‘Ὀδῖ, τ’ Ἡῆς ἡγερμένης

Ὀνία καὶ ἥλιος ἔσσι καὶ ἀπὸδύαι Ἡῆδον.—*Odys.* μ. 3.

Where the sun goeth forth in his strength from the chambers of the morning.

behold the ocean scooping out a broad channel, and stretching for miles between mountain banks, or rather the river itself expanding into a sea, and sweeping from their foundations the rocks and the hills which opposed its course. A great river he had hitherto no conception of, for the Ban was but a scanty rill compared with this bright valley of waters, and Fergus could draw no comparison from the River of Lakes, now called the Shannon, for he had never travelled so far. With the grandeur of the ocean, however, he was well acquainted ; but the vigour even of the loftiest minds cannot be always on the stretch, and must by turns feel the caprice and the weakness of human nature, in delighting to come from its pathless range through the fields of air and on the wilderness of the ocean, to mark the silver windings of a brook, and the bloom of flowers on its green margin.

The wind soon swept their little bark along by the bay of Ayr, and the lofty shore of Arran, and brought them between the two green

islands in the gorge of the Firth on the second day after their departure from Cushendun. The attention of Fergus was instantly attracted by a beautiful fort on a high hill of the mainland to the right. It was seemingly well garrisoned, for on the walls a great body of warriors appeared as if to examine the strange skiff which was thus entering the river in full sail.

“What a glorious strong-hold for a band of patriots!” said Fergus, “does that fine Rath belong to the king of Strath-Clyde?”

“Aye, that it does nou,” said the Caledonian, “sin thae wyl’ Romans left the country; but as lang’s they war’ here they keepit aye a stieve grip o’ the Carkel-knock, * an’ wadna be dung out o’t.—But what’s ado

* Erse, *Caer-cael-knoc*, the camp of the hill of slaughter, now called simply the Knock; on the top the trenches are still to be seen. The Romans had left Scotland about half a century before this little voyage. —Innes, *Critical Essay*.

yonner think we sirs? They're a' comin' down the hill, I think, like a string o' wyl' geese."

"Some holiday, perhaps," said Fergus;
"are they Christians?"

"Ou ye needna speer that: the're nae pagans nou south o' the Clyde, an' binna a doverin' ane, aibles, in the wyl' muirs o' Galloway, or some o' the Drumalbin or Strathearn fo'k, it may come down at a hap'ner time wi' a drove o' nowt, or seekin' tae pick a quarrel.—But I canna tak' my een aff thae chaps it's comin' doun the Knock sae blithie-like; an' muisic too they hae wi' them: gin I'm no mista'en, I think I hear the pipes * playin' *Tilly-Coigh*."

* The antiquity of the Bagpipe is proved by its being found on Roman medals and other monuments. It is also mentioned particularly in verses ascribed to Virgil.—

*Copa Syrisca caput Graia ridimita mitella,
Crispum sub Crotalo docta movere latus,*

“ And there’s a fleet of boats,” said Fergus, “ with sails bent, and streamers flying, just leaving the opposite shore of that little island.”

“ A bridal, for a groat !” cried M’Gurdie, had we no better sklint in by tae the shore and see’t ;—we’ll maybe get somebody tae gie us an inklin’ o’ whar’ we’ll fa’ in wi’ this Merlin it ye’re seekin’ for.”

Fergus agreed on this consideration ; but the cunning missionary had a more important motive, namely, the effect of the Catholic ceremonies on the mind of the youth, in preparing him for receiving the doctrines of truth ; and he hoped that the more refined manners of the people (for this was within the old Roman province of Valentia) would also operate strongly on his mind for the same purpose. Fergus, however, was as much struck with the

Ebria famosa saltat lasciva tabella,

Ad cubitum raucos excutiens calamos.

See Macari, Diss. sopr’ un Suonator di Cornamusa.

place as with the people ; for they were now in the rich valley of Largs, encircled with a crescent of hills, covered with woods to their very summit, and the valley itself waving with corn fields and spotted with cottages. At the bottom of the hills, and embosomed among a group of tall elms, stood the church, its neat tower rising above the trees, and its white walls gleaming through their branches. *

All the inhabitants of this beautiful valley were collected on the beach in their holiday apparel, with music and dancing, to welcome the fair bride, who was the daughter of an island chief, and now landed from a “ gay coloured bark,” amidst the loud cheering of the dancers on the beach. The party from the Knock soon after arrived with the bridegroom,

* Were not the voice of all the antiquaries against me, I would, perhaps, venture to pronounce this church to be the celebrated Candida Casa of Bede, so renowned in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland ; but I dare not remove it from Galloway.—See Innes, &c.

who was commandant of the fort, and both bands united and advanced, with gladness sparkling on every face, to the white church among the trees. Fergus was for retiring when they reached the church, lest he should intrude on the ceremonies, but M'Gurdie assured him that the Christians did not, like the Druids, conceal any of their mysteries, and that all were welcome. The youth entered, and being recognised as a stranger of noble appearance, the crowd made way for him and his conductor, till they reached a part of the church whence they could see the marriage-rites to advantage.

The youth was very much struck, as M'Gurdie had foreseen, with the simplicity and openness of the whole ceremony, and it rendered him anxious to learn more of the rites and tenets of this new religion, of which he had heard nothing hitherto, except what came to him through the envious misrepresentations of the Druids; but he did not forget to make inquiry concerning Merlin, and was told that

he abode chiefly in the upper part of the kingdom,—meaning, by this term, the kingdom of Strathclyde. They directed him to sail up the river as far as Bal-na-Glasco, where he would obtain farther intelligence of the prophet. With this, the voyagers departed again for their skiff, leaving the marriage-party to renew their pastoral dance on the beach. They accordingly steered through the little fleet of island boats which had accompanied the bride, and were at anchor in the bay, and directed their course up the Firth.

The attention of Fergus, to the great delight of the missionary, was now engaged in questioning him concerning Christianity ; but many of his questions were of rather puzzling solution. For example, he could not understand, if Christianity were the only true religion, as the Catholics affirmed, why God was so long in revealing it to the world. M'Gurdie told him of the early revelations given to the Jews ; but this made matters worse, when he understood that Canaan was not so large a

country as Ireland, and that the Israelites never made the neighbouring nations the wiser for what God had revealed to them. "Now why," said Fergus, "should God reveal his will to a handful of men in a corner, and order them to keep it secret among themselves for four thousand years?" "Because," replied the missionary, "it was his own will, and the fulness of time was not yet come." "Then all the people," said Fergus, "who lived for these four thousand years in Ireland, and Britain, and Gaul, and Spain, and other places I have heard of, must all have been damned because they were not Jews." "I do not know," said M'Gurdie, "these are questions which the Christians never meddle with, so far as I know, judging it improper to fathom the counsels of heaven." *

* Would that all Christians had, like M'Gurdie, abstained from such improper discussions, which only put weapons in the hands of infidels. There are, to my knowledge, about a thousand learned works to prove the

Night was beginning to advance on them when they turned the bend of the firth and entered the mouth of the Clyde; but their vessel was not of such heavy burden as put them in danger of sand-banks, and they held on their course. The night was fair and mild, the stars sparkled in the quiet sky, and the

truth of the Bible, *by bringing which into question, and particularly by propagating infidel objections*, they always make more deists than Christians, and ought to be burned in a mass, as dangerous to the cause they pretend to support. The Bible, indeed, does not need such support; and Lord M***** did well when he refused to accept a copy of Chalmers' Evidences and Sermons against Modern Deism. "No," said his Lordship, "I thank God I have a Bible, whose testimony I would believe sooner than any human production. Besides, I am told that this writer has learnedly rejected the testimony which the Scriptures bear of themselves, in order, perhaps, to make his own books necessary, and I am an enemy to all money jobs in religion." Such is, indeed, as Massuccio says, "*La guasta vita de finti Religiosi.*"

river floated by so calmly, that it looked like a long waveless lake.

“What lights are these before us, high above the level of the river?” said Fergus; “they seem to be on some hill in the midst of the stream.”

“Yon’s the watch-fires,” replied McGurdie, “the watch-fires o’ Car-Alclyde, a far stronger bit nor the Carkel-Knock yet, it ye thought sae muckle o’.”

“Is it in the midst of the river?” rejoined the youth.

“Na, no just that naethèr : it’s just like as ye wud stoo the head and the shouther^s aff Ailsa, an’ set it in the water, a stae^{stae} cast^{cast} twa frae the brae : * it’s no i’ the middle, as ye’ll see belyve.”

Car-Alclyde, now Dumbarton Castle, was

* This rock was once farther in the river, which is here two miles wide, than at present : so late as A. D. 1434 it was regularly surrounded by the tide.—See Harding’s Chronicle, 231, and Smollett’s Humphry Clinker, Vol. III.

an important strength in these early times, as it served to defend the metropolis of Strathclyde, which lay like a half-moon round the back part of the rock. It is this ancient town of Alclyde which M'Pherson thinks is the Balclutha of Ossian, though it is well known that Ballyclutha is a place on the Irish river Clyde, which falls into the sea to the north of Dublin, and is known all over Britain by the popular song of "Kitty of the Clyde." In Bede, and all the old writers, Dumbarton is uniformly called Alclyde; but M'Pherson was fully able to manage much greater things than the carrying of towns and countries over his.

~~As~~ ~~they~~ they were now standing off this fort, and could see, by the light of the watch-fires, the guards pacing to and fro with their battle-axes over their shoulders, and their arrows at their back. Scattered lights appeared also from the royal city itself, and from their number and distance, Fergus judged that Alclyde was a much more extensive place than he had imagined. Colraine was the largest town he

had hitherto seen ; but the capital of Strathclyde, if he might pronounce from the position of the straggling lights, was greater beyond all compare. The strength of the fort, indeed, had contributed greatly to the increase of the city ; and its being a frontier station of the Romans, had tended much to refine the inhabitants, so that at this time it was inferior to no city within the Roman walls in splendour and refinement.

The wind, however, waited not on speculations about the extent of cities, but carried them slowly up the stream ; till the boat, contrary to their expectations, went aground, not on a sand-bank, but on a solid bed of gravel immediately under the shade of a black looking hill that rose on the north of the river. The trampling of horses in the water soon accounted for the accident.

“ Keep us a’ ! ” cried the guide, “ gin we binna devell’t against Dumbuck ford, * an’

* So late as the year 1769, there was a ford at Dum-

thae night troopers 'ill be on us in a gliff, gif we dinna get a heeze aff."

Fergus drew his sword, and determined not to yield to the horsemen should they attack them, without showing them the bravery of an Irish hero; but he was for once prevented from making a heroic defence, by the troopers accosting them in a friendly manner, and two of them dismounting to assist them in getting the boat heaved into deeper water. The troop belonged to the King of Strathclyde, and was marching to the defence of the Northern Wall, which the Romans had formerly reared on their frontier, and which ~~Drust, of the~~ Hundred Battles, the warlike ~~King of the~~ Caledonians or Picts, was advancing to demolish, as inimical to his plan of subjugating the countries to the south of the Forth and Clyde. The ardent spirit of Fergus was kindled at this intelligence, and he

buck with only two feet water at ebb-tide.—Watt's Survey.

would gladly have joined the Strathclyde cavalry in this struggle for independence ; but he recollected his embassy, and wishing them all success, he ordered M'Gurdie to steer onward. The stream, however, was against them from the ebbing of the tide, and the morning found them advanced only a few miles from the ford, where they had run aground.

CHAPTER IV.

There the wise Merlin, whylome wont,—they say,
 To make his wonne,—y the loude water-fall,—
 Which ever with deepe voice the wind did call,
 The gentle warbling wind, low answering to all.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queene*, III. and II.

Che fai tu echo mentre ch'io ti chiamo?—*Amo*.

Politian, Orfeo.

THE inquiries which Fergus continued to
 make at his guide concerning Christianity,
 had made the missionary more unreserved in
 the expression of his sentiments,—though he
 had never fairly confessed himself to be a
 Christian to the youth, lest he might on that
 account distrust him. It was plain, however,
 that he had already made a strong impression
 on the mind of Fergus, that Christianity was

a very sublime religion, particularly in the character it gives of the attributes of God, so very different from those of the blood-thirsty deities of Druidism. The difficulty of understanding the mystery of the Trinity; which has always been a stumbling-block to rude nations receiving the gospel; M'Gurdie got over in the way Saint Patrick had done, by referring to the shamrock or field clover, which bears three green leaves on one foot-stalk, and which has, from this comparison to the Trinity, first made by Saint Patrick, continued from that time to be the national badge of Ireland. M'Gurdie had never led Fergus to admire the enthusiastic zeal of the Apostle, in venturing his life among enemies, to diffuse the truths he believed; for the youth could admire, even in a foe, the noble attributes of genius and laudable ambition. Fergus had just expressed this sentiment with warm feeling, when M'Gurdie pointed to a neat cottage built in the Roman style, on the north bank of the river, saying,

“ See ye that bonny heartsome looking on-
stead up on the brae yonner, amang yon
green bushes, wi’ a’ thing sae tosh and cozy
about it ?”

“ Is it the cottage on the height you mean,
with the cattle feeding on the green slope be-
low it ?”

“ Aye, just that same ; yon’s the place it
Saint Patrick was born at, an’ ran about in
his young days, afore he was ta’en awa a pri-
soner tae Ireland : a bonny bit it is too, an’
as mony gowans on the craft as wad ser’ a’
the lambs o’ Strathclyde tae nibble at for a
half ~~summer~~. See, yon ’ill be his niece gawn
o’er the know wi’ her leglin tae milk her
ewes, a modest-like lass she is too : It’s his
brother Senan, it’s gudeman o’ the biggin’,
and keeps the bit grun’.”*

* Saint Patrick was born near Duntocher, in the pa-
rish of Kilpatrick, Dumbartonshire, and is surnamed
M’Alpine in the *Dan na h Inghin*. The name of his
brother is still preserved in Inchinnan, or Innis-Senan,

“Do you think,” interrupted Fergus, who had not been attending to his instructor, “Do you think those are our friends the horsemen, riding along the brow of the hill there?”

“Whunabe it’s like them,” said M’Gur-die, after clearing his eyes and examining the band; “an’ yonner a gatherin’ o’ the Pehts whunnerin’ at the dyke wi’ a’ their birr, as if they wadna lea’ a clod o’t tae haud out a stirk, let alane to be a wa’ for sodgers tae fecht ahint.”

The Strathclyde cavalry soon made a vigorous assault on those who were demolishing the rampart, but the Picts; though inferior in numbers, maintained their ground with firmness, aiming their arrows for some time from behind the wall. At last the cavalry gave way, and the victorious Picts mounted on the

that is, Senan’s Isle, on the other side of the river; and in the surname Sheddan, or Senan, still common.—
Trans. of the Scot. Antiq. Society, Vol. II. Part I.

wall to complete the rout. Fergus had almost leaped from the boat to join and rally his friends as he called them, but M'Gurdie prudently restrained him, and keeping the helm steady to the wind, they soon lost sight of the field of the skirmish, and advanced towards Bal-na-Glasco. Here their course was stopped by a fine bridge of boats, which the Romans had thrown across the Clyde, and the attention of Fergus was attracted by the first sight of a Caledonian town, for Largs was merely a few scattered cottages, and they had passed the royal city of Alclyde in the dark.

At Bal-na-Glasco were streets on each side of the bank of the river, communicating with the bridge of boats; but the body of the town lay on a slope at a short distance, on the left bank. The houses were chiefly built after the Roman fashion, though some of them were in the original rude style of the country composed of wattles and clay, or, in a still more inartificial manner, of walls of growing

turf, a species of building still practised in Galloway and in the Highlands. The town was well fortified, according to the custom of the times, with turf ramparts and trenches, and though it was greatly less in size than Alclyde, Fergus was enraptured with its fine streets and fortifications, and determined to advise his father, on his return, to improve his little town of Colraine, in imitation of the ramparts, and the fine Roman houses at Bal-na-Glasco.*

Fergus and his guide were directed at Bal-na-Glasco where they would find Merlin, but they had to leave their skiff at ~~the boat~~ bridge, and proceed up the side of the river by land. This prophet must not be confounded with a

* Those who are not acquainted with old writers may blame me for not mentioning the High Church, or St Mungo's Cathedral ; but it was several centuries after this, when Kentigern, commonly called Mungo, that is, the Good, began this edifice.—See JOCELIN, in *Vit. Kentigern*.

Welch magician of the same name, who is famous in Chivalric Romance ; and I have even doubts whether we have had any tolerable account of this singular Caledonian, for old Geoffrey, who has written his life in Monkish Latin, was not very particular in examining historical facts. According to *our* documents, Merlin was affected from a boy with strange visionary fancies, somewhat akin to that which the Greeks, among whom it was not uncommon, called Nympholepsy, one of the most beautiful dreams of enthusiasm which was ever twined with human feelings. Merlin was still a youth, but in his boyhood, he one day, while rambling in the woods of Larnark, chanced to see the daughter of the Caledonian monarch, who had been separated from the royal hunting party during the chase of a stag. Now Cora, for so the princess was called, was really a beautiful young creature, and the chase had so enlivened her countenance, and thrown the ringlets of her hair into such graceful disorder, that young Mer-

lin was struck as by enchantment, and stood fixed in pleasing astonishment, as if he had seen a visitant from paradise. The lovely vision moved through the wood, like a white cloud through the dark blue sky, and to his astonishment made directly for the river. He darted after her, but the palfrey outstript him, and he could only catch a glimpse of the fair rider at a distance through the trees. The wood, however, became thicker near the river, and retarded her speed so much, that Merlin was fast gaining ground, being hurried on by an agony of feeling to save her, if he could, from the destruction ~~on which~~ she seemed to be heedlessly rushing; for the river banks are here very precipitous, and the river itself falls in thunder over a high rock, into an awful chasm below. "Stop! O stop!" he cried, as he rushed through the bushes, but, alas! all his speed was in vain, for the palfrey had taken fright, and would not be checked, and he arrived on the dreadful brink in speechless perturbation, at the instant it sprung with

the hapless damsel into the gulf of the cataract, and was swept in a moment beneath the dashing of its foam.

Merlin was found next morning by his sister Ganiëde leaning to a tree, and his eye fixed on the rushing of the cataract, in motionless agony, and answered not when she spoke to him. He was taken home by force, but could not be brought to speak for several days, and when he was not forcibly restrained, he always broke away to the precipice where he had seen the awful fate of the lovely princess, and stood gazing wildly on the agitated waters of the gulf.—At length he spoke; but his language, like his fancy, partook of the colouring of the dream, which never left him, whether he was asleep or awake.

He had always from infancy been of a solitary and retired disposition, but with very strong feelings; and this awful scene so overpowered him, that it left an indelible tinge on his fancy during life. His parents soon found that restraint made him pine in melancholy,

and with much tenderness allowed him to give way to his visionary feelings. Ganiëde, who, by the way, was afterwards Queen of Strathclyde, was very fond of her brother, and to humour his dreams, she devised the plan of erecting a little cottage among the bushes, on the precipice in view of the cataract, where he might indulge his fancy, while he was sheltered from the weather. *

When he grew up to youth, he came to think and speak with intelligence, and was quite rational on every topic but one ; for he firmly believed that the beautiful Cora visited his cottage on the precipice, ~~and~~ held conversations with him ; and his sister often overheard him talking to this visionary nymph, as if she had been present. Nay, he often related those wonderful conversations, and the

* I need not tell most of my readers, that Cora Linn, one of the finest water-falls in the kingdom, takes its name from the princess who so haplessly perished there. Merlin's cottage was on the south side.

poetical colouring of the language in which he reported them, frequently had with it an air of prophecy ; and this was more particularly the case, when he had lately heard any thing which attracted his notice. This circumstance soon took air in a superstitious age, and some of his predictions having been by chance fulfilled, his fame spread abroad, both over Strathclyde and all the neighbouring kingdoms, before he had reached the age of manhood. His solitary disposition, however, still abode with him, and he always fled when any body came to consult him. His sister was, accordingly, had recourse to in these cases ; but it was frequently several days before she could obtain from him any answer to the numerous questions with which he was assailed, and oftentimes she could obtain none. His prophecies were no trick of knavish deception : both himself and Ganiëde firmly believed in them ; and he constantly affirmed that they were delivered to him by the beauteous Cora, when she came to his cottage. Indeed, there

is no difficulty in solving the mystery, for his sister and he talked over the matters about which he was consulted, and these mingling in his mind with the lovely dream of the nymph which ever haunted him, produced the visions which were, as usual, interpreted according as the events afterwards fell out.

This was the extraordinary youth whom Fergus came to consult, and he had now arrived with his guide in the vicinity of Lanark, which has been said to take its name from the number of orchards that in those days abounded there. M'Gurdie, however, was not so well acquainted with his route here, as a guide ought to have been, for, as it drew towards night, he fairly confessed that he had lost his way. They had also got into the woods, of which the country was, indeed, then full, and they could perceive no track that might lead them to the town, for they had come by the north side of the river, as being more open than that on the south. The night closed on them, and they were still astray, when Fergus

made a pause, as if he had heard something uncommon, and said with wonder to his companion, "Do you hear that sound among the trees?"

M'Gurdie listened awhile, and replied, "Atweel do I no, but I'm no that dune gleg i'the hearin', sin' I teuk a sair caul', Beltan was a twa year; but what wult be, think ye?"

"Are we near the sea?" rejoined Fergus.

"The sea! what gars ye speer that, whun we hae gane mony a lang fit frae't: 'Deed we're no ne'r the sea, gin it hinna swoopit awa' the braidside out o' the kintra."

Fergus insisted, however, that they were hard by the sea shore; and as he was too well acquainted, he said, with the voice of the waves to be mistaken, he resolved to go towards the place from which the sound came, to convince his guide of his mistake, and he soon found himself on the brink of one of the grand cataracts of the Clyde. The total want of curiosity in those rude times

had prevented Fergus from receiving any intelligence of this sublime scene, and his companion was wholly ignorant of its existence. It was not the fall of Cora, however, being farther down the river than it, but it was little inferior to it in grandeur; and the darkness, and the deep quiet of the woods, and hollow dashing of the waters down the rocks, and the horror that breathed from the gloom of the gulf into which they fell, produced on the mind of the youth feelings of inexpressible sublimity. He had seen the ocean warring with its mountain shores, but he had not known till now that rivers mingle in the fierce conflicts of the elements, and crush the rocks in their fury, while they smooth their path to the valleys, and trample on the barriers that oppose their course. He listened to the roar of the waters, and he saw gleaming through the darkness the broad white stream of the river, foaming over the awful gap, like the war-horses of a mighty army leaping the rocks before the sword of a pursuing foe. He look-

ed down into the chasm below, but all was dark, and he was left to fancy the boiling tumult of the waters, from the doubling thunder which beat the air, and echoed through the silence of the woods the terrible strife of the elements.

The guide, however, was more anxious to find his way than to listen to this noise of many waters, which so charmed the soul of young Fergus, and he spared not all his eloquence to draw him away from the dark verge of the cataract. They again wandered through the tanglings of the wood, but could discover no path, nor even the glimmer of a cottage light. It was midnight, when they found themselves by the side of a small brook, which was warbling its sweet music among the birches, a circumstance they thought of fortunate occurrence ; for the foresters commonly built their cottages on the side of a running stream. The wanderers, therefore, resolved to follow the course of the brook, till they should discover the dwelling of some forester who had settled on its banks.

They had not gone far when they found that, instead of meeting with a woodland cottage, they had entered the mouth of a tremendous glen, from the jaws of which the brook issued, and they could hear the hollow brawling of the waters coming from a distance through the dark ravine, as if from a cavern embosomed and hidden among the woody rocks. They advanced a short distance through this gap, to see whether it might not soon terminate; but they could see nothing but a dark continuation of the chasm, and the rocks rising awfully on each side of them; and the bushes, which hung from the opposite cliffs, almost mingling their branches over their heads, while the motion of their leaves, in the night-breeze, made the dim stars, in the narrow belt of the sky which they saw high above the rocks, appear to dance and vacillate in their airy path. But with all its gloom, there came a charm from the summer night, which gave it a kind of pastoral sweetness; for the birches breathed their fragrance

over the brook ; and the water-ouzel sung his lonely song far among the rocks ; while the sky-larks sent down their midnight warblings from the upper air,—“ es singet die steigende.”* Our travellers saw no end of this deep glen, whose rocks seemed to rise higher, and approach more closely over the little stream as they advanced, and they were compelled to retrace their steps to the open forest. †

They now left the brook, as there seemed to be no chance of meeting with a cottage, and began to pursue their journey eastward, over a broken rising ground, the forest still continuing to accompany them. After wan-

* Kotzebue.

† The above occurred at the wild glen of Cartlan Craigs, near Lanark, of which Dovedale in England is a beautiful miniature. The Dargle in Ireland is a similar glen, but on a grander scale —It may not be improper to state, that in North Britain, where the nightingale is unknown, the sky-lark, and the sedge-bird, [*Motacilla salicaria*,] and the water-ouzel, (a little blackish bird with a white breast,) sing all night in the summer months.

dering about for some time, they came to a small hollow, scooped out in the wood, where they sat down wearied with their tedious wandering. They had not sat long when they heard a voice among the trees, and they went forward in the direction it came from, hoping that they would now find some habitation. When they came nearer the speaker, they were astonished to find that his words were scarcely of earthly mould, and he seemed to be conversing with the winds, for no one answered him ; and still he went on to talk in a wild strain of poetic imagery, and, at intervals, would pause as if to listen for a reply. At last they observed a pretty echo responding to the speaker, and found that he was actually conversing with this—*τὸ πρῶτον ἡσυχία ἐκείνη* *—sweet babbling image of a voice. This occurrence was so singular, that they were struck

* *Archias Epigr.*—Merlin's Echo is still pointed out to travellers by the guides of Lanark. It is to the east of Glen Cartlan.

with superstitious awe for the being who thus held converse with the unseen inhabitant of the woods ; but they had not learned so much of Merlin's history as to conjecture that this might be the prophetic youth, as indeed it was.

Merlin had lately, in his wanderings, discovered this fine echo, and he instantly fancied that it was the voice of his Cora, who had left her airy dwelling among the rainbows of the waterfall, to accompany his steps through the wood. From the time of this discovery, he paid daily and nightly visits to this solitary spot, where he would abide for hours in wild converse with the echo. His parents and his sister were much distressed at this new turn of his singular fancyings ; for he had to cross the Clyde in a small boat, and the river was frequently swollen and impetuous ; but they could not wean him from the spot either by threats or caresses.

Our wanderers, after they had listened awhile to this wonderful dialogue, thought fit

to accost the visionary. He gazed at them in silence ; but when they inquired for a place where they might take shelter for the night, he broke away through the woods, and left them to wonder at his wild movements.

It was not long before the day began to break, for the sun at this season rises very early, and they met a forester going to his morning toil, who directed them to the dwelling of Merlin's father, on the other side of the river. When they arrived there, they found that the person whom they had already met in the woods was the prophet himself, who had not yet returned. Fergus was requested to impart what he wanted to be resolved to Ganiëde, whom he found to be a plain modest girl, with a cast of melancholy in her countenance, which seemed indeed to be a family peculiarity. As a favour also to the noble stranger, and as she was particularly pleased with the frankness of young Fergus, she undertook to show them the place where the beautiful Cora had so haplessly

perished, a thing she would not have done had her brother been at his cottage ; for he could not endure any intruders in his sacred seclusion. To see the cataract itself, I believe nobody in these early times would have gone far except a poet, though I cannot well credit the French traveller Hennepin, who says the American Indians pass close to the great falls of Niagara without taking any notice of them ; for these mighty wonders of nature cannot fail to strike the rudest savage that ever roamed in a forest when he chances to see them, though his curiosity may never prompt him to make a visit on purpose.

Fergus had a strong poetical cast of thought, as is usually the case with youths of superior mind, and he was no less struck with the sight of the cataract of Cora than he had been with the obscure view of the other fall which he had come upon in the night. The sun shone bright on the dark woods that mantled the cliffs above the fall and overhung the river, which rolled rapidly along a narrow channel,

till at a giant leap it sprung from the brink of the awful precipice in one broad rushing sheet of foam.—

————— Look back !—

Lo ! where it comes like an eternity
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract,
Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn
A rainbow sits amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn :
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love-watching madness with unalterable mien.

Fergus could not look down the precipice over which the fair princess had been thrown into the tumult of the waters, without shuddering with horror ; for his fancy pictured to him the furious steed in the very act of leaping from the brink, and tearing the helpless young creature from the twig she had grasped in de-

pair, while her heart throbbed with convulsive shivering at the terrible fate into which she was instantly hurled. He followed the awful picture into the foaming column of the cataract, and the distracted boiling of the waters in the gulf,—

—καταβύθῳ ἐν γέτρῃ ἀργυρέῃ ζοῖζυμεναι—*

Deep under the cliffs of the stormy rocks.—

But the very dream made his brain reel in dizziness, and he shrunk in horror from this dreadful image of his fancy, as if he had seen the lady shivering with the throes of death, when she disappeared amidst the rushing of the waters.

The cottage was ornamented with more taste than was common in those early times, in imitation, perhaps, of some Roman hermitage which they might have seen on the Clyde. It was completely embosomed in a little clump

* LYCOPHRON, *Cassandr.* 1321.

of birches, among whose boughs honeysuckles climbed and flaunted : at the door, which opened on the cataract, were two fine mezerions, which had been brought from the woods, and planted there along with rose-bushes, and the sweet scented hyacinth, and the purple geranium, and other natives of the Larnark woods ; for Ganiöde, whose taste directed all, knew nothing of the jessamine, and lilacs, and carnations, which now ornament our arbours and gardens. Behind the cottage grew a thick holly, whose dark green contrasted well with the livelier hues of the birches and hazles among which it was placed. Merlin told his sister that, while he was sitting in the cottage, the princess often appeared to him hovering in the spray of the cataract, and sometimes seated on the arch of the rainbow, which during sunshine spans the rocks over the gulf, and at such times she would paint in the brightest hues the scenes of futurity on the bosom of the air. This was a dream, but it was a beautiful one, and

probably furnished Boiardo and Ariosto with their elegant poetic creations of Merlin's fountains and painted halls, and Spenser with the magic Mirror in the Faery Queene ; and had we thought of turning our plain tale into a romance, the little cottage could easily have been changed into a palace of silver, and the waterfall into an amber fountain ; but we dislike interweaving such extravagant fancies with a true history.

Fergus had to remain two days before any reply could be obtained from the prophetic youth, during which time he always haunted the cataract, when he knew that Merlin had crossed the river to converse with the echo. M'Gurdie failed not to be in waiting, and he had so well timed his account of the several doctrines of Christianity, particularly of the attributes of God, which is, without question, the most striking part of our holy religion, that Fergus became greatly interested in the subject, and, at length, was as fond to listen as the missionary was to instruct. He did

not, however, express any wish to become a Christian, but M'Gurdie thought that what he had learned would not fail, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to work upon his mind, and finally bring him into the fold ; and this was all, indeed, that Saint Patrick had expected. M'Gurdie, therefore, deemed his work completed with the desired success, and proposed to leave him at the mouth of the Firth to go home to his friends, as he had pretended was the intention of his journey, resolving, in the meanwhile, to take the first opportunity of joining Saint Patrick.

At length Ganiëde took Fergus aside, and delivered to him the response, which Merlin's heavenly nymph had returned to his questions, which purported,

That Erin's green isle
Shall sorrow and smile
Ere the summer flowers be shed ;
For her sons shall vie,
And her sons shall die,
And many a warrior low shall lie,
Ere the queen of Erin be wed.

It is well known that prophecies are uniformly a doubtful class of productions, and so it seems is this, not by interested design, however, it must be recollected, but from the singularity of the dreams which haunted the young prophet's fancy. "I beheld," said he, "and, lo, the moon shone bright on the Linn, and the lovely Cora came down through the air apparelled in light, bearing in her hand a white scroll made of the silver clouds which were floating among the stars. And I looked, and behold she stood on the crystal spray of the flood, and she opened the scroll and spread it abroad on the waters, and on the woods beside the waters. And when the scroll was opened, I saw in the midst thereof an isle of the sea, and it was green, and beset about with great rocks as with a girdle. And on the isle two great companies were assembled, like two great armies: and the armies fought, and the nobles of the land were slain with great slaughter, and another chief was slain also.—And again I looked, and, lo, a mar-

riage-feast was set out in rich array, and the bride was fair to look upon, surpassing the daughters of women in beauty. And at the feast, I saw those who had fought and conquered, who rejoiced exceedingly, that the king of the land was made glad with his espousals. Now, when I saw those things, my heart yearned within me to know the meaning of the vision, and I spake and said, "Cora !" and she answered, "What wouldest thou ?" And I said, tell me what green isle is that which I see encompassed about with rocks as with a girdle ; and she said "Erin." And again I turned me to speak, but Cora put her finger on her lips, and rose on the moonbeam which played on the waters, and she was gone, and the scroll also was gone, and I sat me down to muse on the vision I had seen on the cliffs above the river."

Such was the clear intelligence of futurity which Fergus received to carry to his father, and as no occurrence worthy of notice took place on his voyage back, except that the doc-

trines of Christianity often employed his thoughts, together with his admiration of the mountain scenery of the coast ; we shall leave the reader to interpret the prophecy at his leisure.

A Scottish antiquarian friend, on overlooking the last two chapters, expressed his surprise that Fergus did not hear of several curiosities in old Scotland, recorded by Hector Boetius, and he handed me the following notes of these wonders, most of which, it will be seen, were out of the route of Fergus ; but may amuse those who have not the book at hand.

Imprimis.—In Carrick ar mony strang castellis, rycht strengthy, baith by nature and craft of men. In this regioun ar mony fair ky and oxin, of quhilk the flesche is rycht delicious and tender. The talloun of their wambes is sa sappy, that it fresis never, bot

flowis ay be nature of the self, in manner of oil.

2do. In Kyle is ane stane nocht xii mylis frae the toun of Ayr, xxx feet of hycht and thre ellis breid, callit the deif stane. For quhen ane man is at the fut of it, he may nothir heir quhat is said nor done on the tothir syde. Howbeit ane cannon wer schot at it. Nochtheless ay the more he standis a driech fra it, he heris ay the better.

3tio. Within Loch Lomond ar xxx ilis weil biggit with kirkis, temples, and houses. And in this loch ar thre notable thingis, fisch swomand but ony fyn ; ane rycht dangerous and storme wal but ony wynd ; and ane ile that fletis heir and there, as the wynd servis.

4to. Na rattonis ar sene in this cuntre, (Buchan.) And als sone as thay are brought there they de. [Confirmed by Shaw in his History of Moray. Page 160, edit. Edin. 1775.]

5to. In Buchquhane grows aytes but ony tylth or seid. Quhen the peple passis with

set purpos to sheir their aytis, they fynd nocht but tume hullis. Yet quhen they pas but ony premeditatioun, thay fynd their aytis ful and weil ripit. Thir thingis cumys nocht be nature, but ar the illusioun of devillis to the dis-sait of blind and supersticious peple.

6to. In the wod of Caledon was sum tyme white bullis, with crisp and curland mane, like fiers lionis, and war mair wyld nor ony othir beistis, and had sic hatrent of men, that they came nevir in ony woddis nor lesuris whar thay fand ony feit or haynd thereof.

7mo. The wolfis ar rycht noysum to the tame bestiall in all partis of Scotland, except ane pairt thereof, namit Glenmores. In quhilk the tame bestiall gets little dammage, especialle of toddis. For ilk house nurisis ane young tod certane days, and mengis the flesche thereof (efter that it be slane) with sic meit as thay give to their fowlis, or other smal beisties. And sac mony as etis of this meit ar preservit twa monethis aftir fra ony dammage of toddis. For toddis wyll eit na flesche

that gustis of their awin kynd. And be thair bot ane beist or fowll, that has nocht gusted of this meit, the tod wyll cheis it out amang ane thousand.

8vo. The landwart pepill settis oftymes cawdronis playand with hait water at the cheek of a lyn, and when the salmonds faillis thair loup, thay fall callour in the said caldronnis, and ar then most delicious to the mouth. [This is a refinement of epicurian cruelty, scarcely to have been expected among a rude people : our author says in another place, “ the Scottis rejosit in na thyng sa mekyll as in murder of men and beistis.” Now this *was* the most barbarous murder—is, I should have said, as it is still practised on the Beaulie and other streams. See Sinclair’s Statist. Acc. of Beaulie.]

9mo. The scheip that gangis on Dundore ar yallo ; their teith ar hewit like gold, their flesche red as it war littit with saffron, their woll is on the same manner.

10mo. In the horse mussillis are generit

perlis. Thir mussillis airlie in the morning (when the lift is cleir and temperate) openis thair mouthis a little above the watter, and maist gredelie swellis the dew of heaven, and eftir the measure of the dew they swellie thay consave and breidis the perle. [A more rational account of the generation of Scottish pearls may be seen in M. Faujas St Fond, *Voyage en Ecosse.*]

11mo. Claik geise are bred mony sundry ways, bot ar bred ay allanerly be nature of seis. For all treis that are cassin in the seis, be proces of tyme, apperis first worm etin, and in the small boris and hollis thairof growis small wormis. First thay shaw thair heid and feit, and last of all they schaw thair plumis and wyngis. Finally, when thay ar comyn to the just mesure and quantity of geese, thay flie in the air as othir fowlis dois, as was notably proven in the year of God, &c. &c.

12mo. He that wes trublit with the falling evil, or fallen daft or wod, or havand sic infirmitie *See 74. 75.* that his infeckit blude suld

spreid nae forthir ; and gif ane woman consavit bairn under sic infirmite, baith scho and her bairn war buryit quick.—All dronkards, gluttonis, and consumeris of vittalis, mair than was necessar to the sustenatioun of men, war tane and first commandit to swelly thair fouth of what drink thay pleased, and incontinent thaireftir was drownit in ane fresche rever. [Would not a similar punishment have well befitted the boilers of live salmons, mentioned in No. 8?]

“*Cosmographie and Description of Albion,*” in Bellenden’s Boetius. “Im-
prentet in Edinburgh be Thomas Davidson
Dwelling forrens the Friere Wynd.” The
colophon gives no date : it is supposed
A. D. 1611, and to be among the first
books printed in Scotland.

CHAPTER V.

——Passamo en Irlanda

La qual fra noi e degna de Fama.

Dittamondi, di F. D. UBERTI.

And sure it is a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven, being stored with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly, sprinkled with many very sweet islands, and goodly lakes, like little seas, that will carry even ships upon their waters, adorned with goodly woods, &c.—SPEN-
SER'S *View of Ireland*, p. 29.

THE doubts which the fair Ethne had timidly conceived of the propriety of human sacrifices, and consequently of the religion of which they made a part, were nearly removed by the providential interruption of her dreaded nuptials with O'Neil. She had not, as has been already told, made any disclosure to her father of her reluctance to this marriage,

because she could not, even at the expence of her own peace, give the old man a moment's pain ; but she had anxiously supplicated the goddess Onvana to interpose her celestial aid for her deliverance, and she had gone so far as to resolve, that should this dreaded marriage be miraculously interrupted, she would henceforth consider her doubts as groundless and vain. The accidental appearance of poor Jenny Grougar was just such an interposition as she had supplicated, and her relation to the victim lately sacrificed to the Goddess, Ethne also considered as a proof of the miracle. Still, however, in spite of her resolution, she could not reconcile herself to the shedding of human blood ; and the more she strove to banish all her former misgivings from her mind, the more pertinaciously her thoughts wandered to the religion of the cross. It may not be either impious or uncharitable to suppose, that there was a particular circumstance which was the leading cause of such wanderings of thought, though she herself was

either not aware, or did not wish to be aware, of its existence. This was her love for the prince, which had, without her perceiving it, swayed her thoughts in thinking favourably of the religion he professed.

A similar struggle of principles had for the same reason affected the mind of the prince, and other circumstances concurred with an event which befell him, to put his Christianity in imminent peril of being renounced. You may have remarked, that Malthuine is not mentioned among the captives who were so heedlessly thrown into the hands of their enemies at the pass of Darrogh. The truth is, that he was not in the expedition, as he had not returned to the palace since he departed to the north, and had been given over by the king as having joined O'Neil in his rebellion, or fallen upon some other scheme to dispossess him of his throne. The young princess, however, had no such injurious thoughts of her brother, and was inconsolable for his loss ; while he was making all haste

back from his romantic journey to defend her from the hellish machinations of the blood-thirty priests of the grove.

This laudable design, however, he was not permitted by Providence to carry into execution ; for when he had gone from the peasant's cabin in which he had taken shelter after being shocked with the midnight rites of Ethne and Callye Mulloy over poor Jenny Grougar, his horse took fright at a herd of deer which scampered across the path before him, and threw the prince on the trunk of a fallen tree. When he recovered from the sudden shock of the fall, he found himself so much bruised that he could not walk, much less run after his steed, the sound of whose gallop he still heard at a distance.

Malthuine was thrown into a very distressing embarrassment, for he might be long enough in this solitary spot without an individual passing that way from whom he might crave assistance ; and he found that one of his ankles was, if not broken, so terribly bruised

ed, that it was vain for him to think of being able to move for many days without assistance. He had now time to reflect on his mad journey, and he blamed himself severely for ever having undertaken it. His only wish now was to get some trusty messenger to inform Ethne of his situation, who, he was sure, would find some means to relieve him. Besides, could he but see her, he hoped he might be able by her means to avert the terrible danger which threatened his sister when he could not go to protect her himself; he was little aware that Ethne was perhaps the only person in the grove who was not privy to the design of carrying off Aoine to sacrifice her at the bloody altar. The wish of informing the young Druidess of his situation was very natural; but how was this to be effected? He did not know whether there were an habitation nearer him than the peasant's cabin he had left, and it was several miles off. He conjectured that he could not be far from Dunluce from what he recollected of the country;

but he was much too far to be able to crawl thither, and he knew not whether the hag sisters of the nunnery might admit him within the sacred territory even could he do so. He was in the midst of his examination of this doubtful topic, when he was stunned with the apparition of Calye Mulloy herself, as if she had risen out of the earth by enchantment for the purpose of solving his perplexity. The Vaid was returning to Dunluce from the cabin where the prince had seen her performing the midnight rites, and she came plump upon him before she was aware, for he was lying behind the fallen tree on which the horse had so unfortunately thrown him. She was not accustomed to speak much, except on particular occasions, and she never had the first word with a stranger, unless she thought herself in danger from magic, as in the memorable approach which Saint Patrick had made to her sanctuary when Ethne was landed at Dunluce. She accordingly did not accost the prince, but stood gazing at him to try if she

could discover who he might be. Malthuine was not so sparing of speech, and addressed her with,

“ Pray, good Mother, would you be so kind as request the people of the nearest cabin to remove me to some place of shelter ? I have had a fall from my horse, and am so much bruised that I cannot walk.”

The Vaid listened attentively to his speech, and she continued to make the severest scrutiny of his person with her eyes, to whose penetration she was much accustomed to trust. When she had compared all the evidence she could thus collect of his courtly accent and his noble mien, with the recollections she had of his person when his skiff put in at Dunluce, she concluded that it could be no other than the prince, notwithstanding the disguise he had assumed. Nothing on earth could have given her greater joy than this rencontre ; but she was prudent enough to conceal it, and answering him with,

“ You shall be assisted presently,” she

darted away with wild rapidity, and was out of his sight in an instant.

This event did not tend much to relieve the mind of the prince, for he now began to reflect that he was in O'Neil's territory, and if he should ever again come under that rebel's power, he was certain of being immediately slaughtered to prevent his making a similar escape to that he had made from C'logh-arnbrec. Now he did not know but Calye Mulloy might have discovered who he was; for he recollected her prying looks, and she might be gone like an old vulture to summon her eyrie to the carnage. He hesitated even when he thought of this, whether or not he should attempt to crawl away to some other hiding place; but the thought that he might not again be found by another human being, and might either die of hunger or be devoured by wolves or wild boars, dissuaded him from this attempt, and he lay in painful suspense awaiting the event. The only hope he had, if he should be treated as an enemy, was

that Ethne might possibly come to learn his danger, and devise some scheme for his rescue; but he rejected this hope as soon as formed, because that lovely woman might again endanger her life, a thing which he could not endure even to conceive.

His apprehensions were not removed, when, after a space of time which to him appeared very long, Calye Mulloy again made her appearance with a grizzly band of the Dunluce sisterhood. They soon made a litter from the branches of the fallen tree, and, placing him thereon, without speaking a word, they bore him away to their rocky isle, Calye Mulloy walking beside them, and directing their movements by dumb signs, for she seldom honoured them with verbal commands, except when she could not otherwise make herself understood.

On their reaching the shore, however, a disagreeable circumstance had occurred, for the Vaid had been hurried, by her impatience to secure the prince, to overlook every thing

but dispatch. Now, it may be remembered, that Dunluce rock was only an island at high water, and then it could not be approached but in very calm weather, the waves beat so violently over the ledge of rocks which joined it to the land as to render it impassable, and there was not, as now, a bridge to cross by ; for the workers in wood in those days were not skilled in bridge-making, and they had still less notion of a bridge of ropes, such as that at Carrick-a-Rede, on which modern tourists are accustomed to try the soundness of their heads. While they were bringing the prince then, the tide had risen over this ledge of rocks, and as it blew fresh from the sea, the waves were breaking on it with tremendous fury. The Vaid fretted, and her hags pursed up their wrinkles with marked chagrin ; the prince was almost indifferent, for though he suffered great pain, and would have been glad to rest himself under the shelter of their rude huts, yet he was still ignorant whether he was to be treated as a friend or an

enemy ; and his wonder was increased when he recollected that Ethne said no Catholic could be admitted within the sacred territory. Now, he had never been questioned whether he were a Catholic or a Druid, and, indeed, no question of any sort had been put to him ; for the Vaid wished it to be believed that she had the gift of omniscience, and, consequently, did not require information on any subject. It may be well conjectured that this extraordinary pretension required the most wary management to give it plausibility, and silence was one of the chief means she had recourse to for this purpose.

The tide at length ebbed and left the rocks dry, and the prince was forthwith carried within the boundaries of the sacred isle. But when Calye Mulloy ordered him to be taken to the Tigh-na-Ghaoil, where he knew his beloved Ethne had formerly abode, he instantly forgot the pain of his bruises, and the no less distressing apprehension of being given up to O'Neil, in the pleasure of being under the

roof which had once been honoured with the presence of that lovely woman. He became, indeed, almost unconscious of the presence of the withered crew around him, who were busy in preparing nostrums and repeating charms for the cure of his injured limbs, so that, however they might dispose of him afterwards, they evidently wished, in the first place, to have him cured. They urged him also to drink a cup of mead, because he looked weak and faintish ; but this circumstance recalled him from his love dream ; for both lovers and heroes, though they fear no danger which comes upon them unmasked, have an innate and cowardly dread of poison, and the sleepless instinct of self-preservation made him believe that this mead was certainly drugged for the purpose of destroying him. This instinct, indeed, or reason, as the man of Ethics has it, exercises an all powerful sway over the passions, and often calms them in the highest noon of madness. It now effectually dissipated the bright visions that had begun to

dawn on his weary soul, and filled him with the most gloomy and depressing forebodings of unseen danger, and he refused with horror to accept of the proffered cup.

Calye Mulloy, whose keen eye by long experience could read the thoughts of the heart from the slightest variation of the countenance, soon perceived that he was suspicious of the liquor, and, without uttering a word, she took the cup and quaffed off the whole contents herself, for the behoof of the spirit of prophecy within her, which she took all due and laudable means to cherish with the good things of this life, having the experience that such was delightful thereunto. The prince's apprehensions being thus removed by the deposition of the suspected liquor in the inward parts of Calye Mulloy, he made no ceremony of dispatching the contents of a second cup to warm the shivering spirit of love, which betimes, as in the present case, stands in peril of perishing without the timeous arrival of *material* aid. Nor is this at all to be

wondered at, seeing that the heart in which it is thought to make its chief residence is of mortal clay, and may be corrupted and fail, leaving its fair inhabitant homeless and unsheltered, to wander whithersoever he will.

But what did Calye Mulloy mean to do with the prince? Did she mean to give him up to his enemies? or did she mean to set him free when his cure was completed? or rather, did she not anticipate the reception of the—*ἰγλαὰ καὶ ἀπειροὶ ῥήματα**—splendid and countless ransoms which would be sent from Tara for his liberation? These questions are not at present resolvable; for the Vaid had not herself come to a decided resolution on so important a point; and her thoughts, to all appearance, leaned in a direction different from any of those suppositions. She had, for several reasons, taken a dislike to O'Neil, so that it was not probable she would humour

* Homer.

him so far as to put the prince into his hands, and when this thought, among others, thrust itself into her mind, the spirit of prophecy, or the fumes of mead, fell into great commotion, and made such a hubbub of doubt and discord, that she was glad to dismiss it, and call in others of a more quiet deportment. To set him free without deriving important advantage therefrom, was not among her dreams of the time to come ; but after weighing all the reasons which she could collect as to ransoms, she could not, with all her penetration, descry that a balance of advantage would thence accrue to her own person, proportionate in value to the goods ransomed ; namely, the person of the crown prince of Ireland, the value of which could not be estimated in black cattle or other such property.

At length a notion came into her mind, which seemed to outweigh all the others formerly suggested, and which took its rise from a discovery she had the penetration to make while Ethne had been formerly her guest. In

short, Calye Mulloy had found out that Ethne loved the prince, and what was singular, the Vaid looked upon her love with approval, in consequence, perhaps, of her dislike to O'Neil. Nay, it is nearly an ascertained point, that the Vaid was not altogether sakeless of the interruption of the marriage ceremonies, though she herself was at that moment superintending the evening banquet of the Mistletoe in her own sacred isle. But a little wild looking man—or, perhaps, Leprighaun, or rather one of the Dunluce hags *en masque*, had been seen skulking about the edge of the forest near the cabin where Jenny Grougar was confined, while the peasants were absent at the festival. Whether this Leprighaun loosed the woman, and led her to the scene of the marriage out of a wicked frolic, was never thoroughly made out, though such suspicions were at that time rumoured.

Now, if Calye Mulloy was really guilty of preventing the marriage of Ethne, it was likely she might have some other scheme a brew-

ing besides the disappointing of O'Neil, as pranks of this description are, like the dish of Diogenes, generally contrived to serve more purposes than one. It is certain that she still retained her settled determination of being avenged on the Catholics for insulting her at the Coluisge, and finding none of her charms powerful enough to make Logaire's army take a pleasure in drowning themselves, she was obliged to recur to some more practicable plan; and such was suggested to her by the discovery she had made of Ethne's love for the prince.

She was almost certain that Malthuine must have given the young Druidess very particular marks of affection, before she had so completely resigned herself to the influence which she observed her passion had obtained; for women seldom run headlong into love, without some grounds of hope extracted from such marks of kindness; and Ethne, young as she was, had a considerable share of prudence. Now, if the prince were really in love, Calye

Mulloy foresaw, aided, no doubt, by prophecy, that he would readily abandon the new religion, and when he was king, would expel those odious Catholics from the land, provided that matters were managed according to the Vaid's wish and expectation.

With these notions buzzing in her brain, Calyc Mulloy set herself to watch the current of the prince's thoughts, in order to discover his sentiments, an employment in which she was uncommonly skilful; and had her rules and precepts for sifting the thoughts come down to our times, it would have saved Dr Reid and Mr Dugald Stewart the trouble of forgetting their own ideas whilst wading and wandering through huge metaphysical tomes in search of the opinions of others. With this view she had caused her maids in waiting to drop such hints to the prince concerning the young Druidess as she knew would operate upon him, if things were as she had conjectured.

In this state he was left for the night to

muse on his singular situation, resting on the same couch on which the lovely Ethne had formerly reposed. The same murmur of the waves also which had lulled her slumbers, and the same sweet whisper of the winds, came to his ear with more delight than the music of a summer evening. And under that very roof she had sat and listened to these celestial sounds, and had looked on these rude walls that now sheltered her lover from the night. It was in vain that he tried to sleep, for though his bruises had not pained him, the pictures which his fancy drew and varied in endless number, would have driven away all the attacks of the "leaden sceptre." He even rose at times forgetting his hurts, and attempted to approach to the shadowy form that came before him in a shape so like his Ethne, that he overlooked the impossibility of her being there.

Calye Mulloy had stationed herself at the door of the Tigh for the purpose already taken notice of; but the prince, unluckily for

her, was not in a mood for uttering soliloquies, which is somewhat singular ; for lovers now-a-days, such at least as we meet with in print, never pass half an hour alone without venting their breath in speeches so denominated. The ears of the Vaid, however, which, by the way, she had unflapped of their usual covering of cat skin, to give a more free and commodious entrance to intelligence from without, had yet been able to catch no sound of articulate texture issuing from the mouth of the prince. Several deep sighs were indeed greedily caught by these same ears, but when conveyed to the seat of intelligence, which the learned Dr Cross, in concurrence with the sages of Otaheite, has placed in the stomach, Calye Mulloy could not digest them into what she longed for, being altogether uncertain whether they were not caused by the pain of his bruises rather than by love. Before the night went by, however, her patience was rewarded by hearing some less equivocal indications of the

state of affairs, and upon the faith of these she determined to act with all speed.

As soon as the morning dawned, accordingly, she repaired to the door of the 'Tigh-na-Ghaoil to begin her operations. Now, her manner was, never to request any one to act in a particular manner, which she knew they would either do or not as suited their convenience or caprice. She had a much more effectual and unfailing method of proceeding; for she drew from her prophetic horde such intelligence as made all dance in accordance to her wishes. In conformity to this system, she informed Malthuine, without preamble, that it was decreed by the fates that he should change his present belief in Christianity, and return to the bosom of the grove, whence he had been craftily misled.* That it was in vain for him to think of opposing the decrees of heaven; if, however, he struggled against these decrees, it might not perhaps bring himself into danger, but the life of a young lady would certainly suffer thereby. It was not

given her to know, she said, who this young lady was, but that, alas, would too soon be known.

Calye Mulloy had pretended ignorance of the young lady's name, lest he might be suspicious of collusion on the part of the Druidess, which would, she knew, most certainly mar her design, as it would go far to cure him of love, nothing being more hostile to genuine affection than underhand tampering with supernatural agency to secure it.

It is the singular fate of prophecies to be uniformly misinterpreted till after their fulfilment, and, consequently, they seldom serve any purpose except that of misleading those who believe in them. This common fate was that of the one which Calye Mulloy had now brought to bear on 'the mind of Prince Malthuine ; for though he had spent the night musing on the beauties of the Druidess, forgetting the danger of his sister as if it had been unreal and visionary, yet no sooner did the Vaid talk of a lady being in peril, than

the thoughts of Aoine flashed suddenly on his mind, and made him start from his couch. His eye, however, happening at this moment to meet the keen glance of the old prophetess in the act of scanning his feelings, and as he did not like such scrutiny, he endeavoured to recover himself from his surprise ; and to do so he was the more anxious, because he was not yet certain whether she knew him.

The sudden start was enough to convince her that her device had taken effect ; and as there was no danger of his escaping so long as he was unable to walk, she added that he need give himself no immediate concern, for she foresaw nothing that would prove unfortunate to him for several weeks to come ; on the contrary, she assured him he should be kindly treated till he were able to go abroad, and he might rest in quiet till then.

CHAPTER VI.

Is there no a bird in this wyde foreste

Will do as meikle for me,

As dip its wee wing in the wan water,

And straik it on my e'e-bree?

From a MS. of Johnnie o' Braidislie.

THE hopes of the rival systems of faith were thus placed upon those faithful lovers, and seemed to look fairest on the side of the Druids, the only overbalancing circumstance in favour of the Catholics, being their expectations of the favourable opinion of their doctrines which McGurdie had so carefully instilled into the mind of young Fergus; and the effect which could not fail to be produced from the numerous churches which Saint Patrick was continuing to have built under his direction. We have formerly remarked that

the Apostle was very skilful in the selection of fit persons to accomplish his designs. M'Gurdie had proved himself eminently so in his craftily drawing Fergus ashore at Largs, to show him the simplicity and openness of the Christian ceremonies, and to awaken his curiosity to inquiry. Farquhar also showed his missionary zeal in enduring, day after day, to hear his faith treated with contempt by the Druids, while he secretly prayed to God to forgive them, and enlighten their ignorance with his Holy Spirit.

He had long watched with assiduity to obtain a private interview with Ethne, to sound her thoughts, and make an attempt to lead her young mind into the way of life ; but she kept herself so secluded, or when she did move out, she was so surrounded by the little girls of her train, who loved her affectionately, and seemed to live only in her smile, that his design was constantly frustrated. It would, perhaps, have been well had he never succeeded, for it led to a catastrophe which I shudder

to relate ;—and I here forewarn my readers of delicate feelings, that, if they shrink from the contemplation of the refined cruelty which fallen man is sometimes so fiendish as to devise, they may pass on to the next chapter ; for though I would, for the honour of human nature, pass it over in silence, I must adhere to the documents before me, even in cases of the most revolting cruelty.

At some distance from Brassail's habitation in the grove was a spring of clear water, which ran down a slope towards the south, leaving a fresh verdure on the belt of grass it passed among in its way to the brook. Over the source of the spring hung an old hawthorn, which had sheltered for ages the primroses and the March violets from the frosts of the early spring, and, when the summer came, had spread its own white blossoms in the sunshine, and given their fragrance to the evening air. Behind it grew a thicket of wild rose-bushes and sloe-trees, intermixed with tall mountain-ashes and bird-cherries, and a

little clump of the same rose-bushes grew by the side of the spring, so that it was shaded and cool even in the noon-day heat of midsummer. This spring the Druids had formed into a pretty well, in the bottom of which the yellow sand was seen sparkling through the clear fountain, and dancing over the little chinks through which the water jetted out of the earth, as pure and fresh as the dew on a morning rose-bud. This pretty well was consecrated to Onvana, the Goddess of the Waters, and all the ceremonies performed there were simple and pastoral, as if they had been instituted by the first shepherd himself in the garden of paradise. No inhuman sacrifice was here offered, and every rite was so suited to the pastoral beauty of the spot, that one would have thought the beings who could thus worship their divinities with simplicity and elegance, would have been horror-struck at the dark and bloody scenes which were transacted in the other parts of the same grove. But this is one of the numerous inconsistencies of

fallen man, who can mask his cruelty in the guise of tenderness, and with a smile can hand a cup of poison to his friend under the semblance of affection.

On the branches of the old hawthorn were hung votive offerings to the Goddess of the Fountain, among which were the shreds which had been cut from the garments of poor Jenny Grougar : a bootless ceremony, for she still continued to rave about the terrible fate of her spouse, in spite of all the charms and the vows which the tenderness of Ethne had employed for her relief. Ethne was now no less troubled for herself than for this unhappy woman ; and she daily came to the pretty fountain to indulge her solitary musings, and to pray to the goddess to direct her aright. But, in the midst of her devotions, she would often check herself, when she thought that the being whom she thus worshipped took delight in human blood and human suffering. And she would even go so far as to think, that, were *she* a goddess, she would be con-

tented with offerings of fruit and flowers, and would forbid her worshippers from sacrificing any thing that had life, and much more the slaughtering of human beings at her altars.

She would then revert to what she had learned of Christianity, during her abode at the palace. 'This religion, she would say, requires no such bloody rites, for one grand sacrifice of the Son of God did away all others. Yet why was *this* sacrifice made? That, she could not understand, as her knowledge of the foundation of Christianity did not reach so far. It is a point, indeed, which has been contested about from the earliest days of the church, and she would scarcely have found two of the missionaries who agreed in the same answer; indeed, it still remains among the—*reserata*—hidden things of God. It is, however, a point which, like many others, it is better for the humble Christian to take as a fact stated for his belief, than to mar his devotion by crude and erring inquiries into the causes which direct the counsels of heaven.

Leave the objections of gainsayers to perish in the wreck of other human follies, and commit to the flames the works of bickering controversy, taking the Bible as it stands in naked truth for the only guide. This counsel, I know, will suit but ill with the religious "swaggerers" that call themselves Christians in our days; and Dean M'Gee* will come blustering upon them with tomes of chaotic notes to mystic discourses, in which he has unblushingly dared to fathom the counsels of the Eternal God, as if they had been mat-

* I refer to his book on the Atonement, in which one or two sermons are flanked with many hundred pages of undigested notes, garbled from all authors, heathen and Christian. His scurrility against Deists is very conspicuous. Was it thus that the meek and lowly Jesus treated mockers? And is it thus that Deists will be gained or silenced? No, Sir, the Saviour set you a better example. Go to your Bible and learn of him, and leave Mrs Hannah More to rake up and trample upon the ashes of Mr Hume, and to expound the will of God for the benefit of the young theologians in the North.

ters of human policy. Away, presumptuous worm of the dust ! be humble, and pray to God to pardon thy audacious vanity, in disturbing the devotion of Christian belief, with thy impious research into the inscrutable secrets of heaven.

Ethne went on to other points of comparison, and dwelt with pleasure on the openness and absence of mystery which the Catholic ceremonies presented ; but, above all, it stole upon her that Malthuine was a Catholic, and would instruct her more largely in the new doctrines. The sight of the hawthorn, and the votive offerings, and the pretty fountain bubbling under it, recalled her again to survey the faith of her childhood ; and her infant feelings of religion were twined with so many lovely recollections of summer beauty, and bright sunshine, and the fields sprinkled with flowers, and the brooks glancing through the thickets, and the fresh greenness of the woods, where the birds sung welcome to every morning, and hymned the departure of every day ;

and then the mountains lay so calm and blue in the distance, and the sky was so richly streaked and spotted with little down like clouds—all formed so heavenly a picture, that it charmed her doubts asleep ; for in her childhood all these beauties had beamed around the ceremonies of her religion, and it could not be false, though it might now wear the image of a dark flower in the lovely scene.

Such is a specimen of the train of thought which wandered through the mind of Ethne in her visits to Onvana's fountain, and haunted her in her dreams. Farquhar had remarked her frequent visits to this fountain, and resolved to take advantage of it, as she had of late sometimes gone alone, in order to be at more liberty to indulge in thought. He came upon her one day, as if by chance, while she sat in deep melancholy on the margin of the fountain, pretending he had lost his way in the wood, whither, he said, he had wandered to muse on the wonders of nature. From that he began to admire the beauty of the

fountain, and gave such a turn to the conversation, that the new religion became the topic of discourse ; and Ethne's mind being previously employed on this very subject, she was easily led to inquire what Farquhar knew of it, and he required no inducement to tell her all he said he had learned concerning it, concealing carefully that he himself was a Catholic. His point was so far gained ; for Ethne was so anxious to learn, that she took frequent opportunities of conversing with him ; and soon found herself so pleased with Christianity, that her wavering mind leaned more and more towards it after every conversation. The thoughts of the prince failed not also to come to her fancy ; and often in the night, while she lay sleeplessly pausing over her doubts, she would wish that Malthuine was near to aid her in resolving them. It is strange she never thought of Farquhar in such cases ; though he was much handsomer than Malthuine. But her mind was now occupied with too high objects to be taken with the per-

sonal appearance of any one, and she seldom thought even of the prince in the light of a lover ; she only wished that he were near her to resolve doubts that hourly arose to distress her mind ; she little knew that the prince himself was agitated with a similar struggle between love and principle.

It would have been rather miraculous if Farquhar, notwithstanding all his caution, had continued his treasonable conversations with Ethne unobserved and unmarked, in the very midst of numerous Druid priests, anxious to raise themselves to favour with the Arch-Druid by the discovery of every irregularity. After the singular interruption of the marriage also, Brassail had been extremely rigorous in scrutinizing every occurrence about the grove, in order to discover, if possible, the cause of this interruption. It was no sooner hinted to him, therefore, that the handsome stranger who had been lately enrolled, was observed to hold private conversations with his daughter, than he determined to get at

the mystery, in a way which had seldom failed to succeed with him. He ordered Farquhar to be seized, and carried to the vault where Saint Patrick had formerly been confined, and at midnight he appointed a grand council to meet there, to examine who and what he was, and what was the subject of his conversations with Ethne. The young Druidess herself was not interrogated, for her father was very unwilling to find her criminal, and though she might be found in fault, he was resolved to wreak all his vengeance on Farquhar, trusting to the virgin sacrifice for a complete expiation of every delinquency of which she had ever been guilty.

At midnight the council met according to appointment, and Farquhar was brought trembling before them, little ambitious indeed of becoming a martyr : but in as much danger of it as any Christian had ever before been. Brassail took his seat on the tribunal, and looked at him with such sternness, that he shrunk back affrighted and hid his face.

“Are you a Christian?” was the first terrible sound he heard echoing through the gloomy vault, and he was so thunder-struck that he stood speechless. “Are you a Christian? answer quickly,” said the Arch-Druid with stern impatience; but Farquhar was utterly deprived of the power of speech, and stood the very emblem of fear. He had not any conjecture that they knew his secret faith, and was not prepared for the shock; and he had not fortitude to confess what he knew would be the sentence of his own condemnation. The Druids, indeed, were not assured that he was a Christian, but the success of the missionaries in the south had awakened their suspicions; and Brassail was induced to put the question at a venture. When Farquhar answered not, the dark conclave looked on one another with wonder; for they interpreted his silence as a confession, and they were stunned with the discovery that he had lived so long among them without suspicion.

“We shall find a way to make you speak,”

said Brassail. "Bring hither the Ghern." This was a dreadful instrument of torture, at the sight of which poor Farquhar swooned away, and the grim Druid who held it stood over him waiting to see whether Brassail would order it to be applied. He was so inhuman. Farquhar started convulsively while his flesh was torn with the terrible instrument, and he gave the most wild and unearthly looks when he opened his eyes by fits, attempting to cry for aid, but his voice was choked in his throat, and fell away like the struggling gasp of death. The cruel wretches, however, stood unfeelingly over him, and seemed to take pleasure to see the writhings of human pain ; and every convulsive start he gave appeared to yield them fresh delight. It was in vain, however, to make him speak, and after continuing to lacerate his body by fresh applications of the torture, they were compelled to give up the attempt of making him speak as hopeless. They were now sure, however, that he was a Christian, at least they

decided so from his terror, and from his not answering when interrogated, and they resolved to treat him accordingly.

The strictest orders were given not to let Ethne know of their proceedings, for Bras-sail had not forgot her interrogations on the subject of the sacrifices, and he dreaded lest this would be no better, for Farquhar had evidently been a favourite with her. She was accordingly told that Farquhar had departed without leaving any notice whither he was gone. This intelligence she felt as a severe misfortune, for she had been making rapid advances in her knowledge of Christianity under his instruction, and had always new doubts to solve or old ones to discuss at every time she could privily obtain an interview with him. She was now again left to her own meditations, for there was no one in the grove to whom she could apply. Her father had formerly, indeed, shared all her thoughts, and she had not kept any thing from him ; but on this subject of religion he had treated her

doubts as so foolish and impious, and had chid her so severely for ever indulging a thought contrary to what she had been taught from infancy, that she had no longer any confidence in him, and ever afterwards carefully concealed her thoughts on this subject within her own bosom. To Farquhar she had appeared as she really was, simply in the light of a modest inquirer, wishing to hear something of the religion which was thus threatening the stability of Druidism ; and he had never taken off his mask, but talked to her of what he said he had heard from others. This conduct was the safest for both, and had been invariably adhered to ; though an impartial spectator of any shrewdness might have easily penetrated the veil.

In a day or two after the disappearance of Farquhar, Ethne went out alone to meditate on the wonderful doctrines she had heard from that young man, and to compare them with the mysteries and terrible ceremonies of the religion of her ancestors. She took the

way to Onvana's fountain, where she had frequently appointed to meet him, but she was so lost in thought that she wandered from the way, and soon found herself at the foot of the cliff where the Rock Nymphs were supposed to dwell. A wild woodland scene it was, with the little brook creeping through the copse at the foot of the cliff, and the cliff itself rising aloft garnished with green bushes and rock flowers, which warped their roots into the crevices and lived on the dew of heaven. Ethne crossed the brook, and clambered up by the side of the cliff, where it began to give place to the slope of a green rising ground ; for her mind was in that wildering mood which draws solace from the romantic and picturesque scenery of nature, and often leads the wanderer to her most unpeopled haunts.

She had got but half way up the slope, when her attention was drawn towards a hoarse tumult of sounds from the top of the rock, which resembled nothing she had ever heard ; but she thought it was most like the

mingled croak of ravens, and owls, and sea-birds, blending in one discordant grumble. As the cliff was the resort of the Rock Nymphs, she immediately fancied that the noise was in some way connected with them, though how she could not guess, as they were fond of sweet music, and did themselves often serenade the forest at the close of day before they retired to their bower of clouds, at the departure of the twilight.

On going higher up, she found that her comparison had not been wrong ; for there was indeed an immense number of ravens and other birds of carnage collected together in a thick cloud around something on the top of the cliff. On seeing the Druidess they rose on the wing with loud screams, flapping their wings and jostling one another, and hovering in the air above her, that she became afraid lest they would fall upon her in a body. But when she looked toward the place which they had been gathered about, she was horror-struck with the sight of what seemed to be

the mangled remains of a human carcase which they had been devouring, and which was placed upright in a narrow cage of wicker-work. She was turning away in a state of tortured feeling from this scene of horror, when she thought she heard a low stifled groan come from the cage, and she shuddered even to think that the person confined there might be alive. She drew nearer, but she could not look on the torn and bloody flesh of the carcase, and kept her eyes fixed on the ground as she advanced to the spot. She would rather have retreated than encountered such a sight, but she could not in pity till she had discovered whether the person were alive.

When she came nearer, she heard such deep and convulsive breathing, that she was no longer left to doubt ; and pity and horror so overcame her at the discovery, that she could scarcely support the conflict of her feelings, as she cried,

“ Alas ! what unhappy wretch art thou ? ”

But she got no answer to her question ; for even if the miserable creature could have spoken it was almost impossible her voice could be heard, it quivered so feebly from her lips. Had she known of the intended virgin sacrifice, or of the prince being in the hands of Calyc Mulloy, she would have immediately conjectured that this was some newly devised cruelty on human victims,; but she was totally at a loss to fancy any thing of this horrid scene. She with much pain raised her voice louder, and at last the miserable wretch heard the sound, for his eyes were streaming with blood, and he could not perceive her.

“ O kill me, kill me—” he groaned in the most heart-rending voice. “ It is two long, long days, and I cannot die.—O the birds ! the birds !——”

She knew the voice. It was Farquhar’s, and this added pangs to her agony, for it flashed on her at once that this dreadful device of exposing him alive to birds of prey had

been invented to punish him for telling her of Christianity.

“ Ah, what can I do for you ?” said the weeping Ethne, for tears had burst from her when her heart was wrung with pain.

“ Water !—one drop of cold water ! and then O kill me—in mercy kill me, if you have any pity.”

She flew in an instant down the slope to the brook—tore up the broad leaf of a cap-weed—filled it with water—and ran panting back to the top of the rock. The voracious birds had already renewed their bloody feast, and flapped around the infernal cage, which had been contrived so that they might only tear the victim by inches. The poor fellow greedily swallowed the water, the only cordial which the dying never loathe, but his throat was so scorched with the unquenchable thirst of death, that it was like a drop in a furnace, and he gasped for more. Ethne, however, would not leave him to the mercy of the ravens till she would return to the brook ;

and her humanity had so far overcome her horror at the sight, that she only thought how she might alleviate the short moments which he had now to live, for his flesh was torn from the very bones, and his blood ran in a stream over the grass. She tore asunder the hellish machine which enclosed him—took off her scarf and bound it around his bleeding brow, and laid him with the most tender care on the soft moss. After he had rested a little he spoke a few words, but not distinctly; she thought it sounded like “The blessing of the God of mercy be on you—Jesus Christ the righteous——” and at last she heard nothing but “O the birds!—the birds.” Poor Farguhar sunk in her arms, and breathed his spirit to God who gave it.*

* It grieves me sore to state, that a planter in the United States of America, so boasted for freedom, had the barbarity to inflict this inhuman Druidical punishment on one of his slaves a few years ago. See Letters of an American Farmer, by Mr H. St John, where

Ethne was so shocked and distressed with the whole scene, that she could not arrange her thoughts to determine what to do, and sat beside the mangled corpse in deep sorrow and suspense, the ravens continuing to hover around her, and sometimes sweeping by as if they would scarcely be deterred from renewing their banquet even by her presence. With all her mild and gentle dispositions, nobody had more presence of mind in difficulties than Ethne. She accordingly determined to cover the body with brushwood and whatever else she could procure, and go to the nearest cabin to procure assistance to get it decently interred. She knew it would be vain to go to her father or his priests for that purpose, and she

the facts are given nearly the same as those above stated ; only I have softened the most painful circumstances. Alas ! fallen man is the same in every age, even in the country which produced George Washington, the brightest name in the world's history.

could rely on the peasants she thought, as she had often shown them kindness.

She was successful. She went to the cabin where Jenny Grougar had been kept, and got the rough foresters to accompany her to the rock. The body was removed to the bosom of a neighbouring thicket, and interred in the best way their means permitted.

CHAPTER VII.

Nè sono a l'erraù, nè a sacripante

————— perdonar più rima ;

Da lor mi leva il Principe d'Aglante.

ARIOSTO, *Orl. Furioso*.

Baith up and down, baith to and fra, we se

This wauld walt-ri-, as dois the wallie sea.

GAVIN DOUGLAS'S *Poetic of Honour*, III. 78.

THE distress of the fair Druidess was much augmented from the consideration, that Farquhar had been thus brought to an untimely fate through her means, and she could with difficulty bring herself to think that her father would have acted with such diabolical cruelty. It even went to weaken her filial affection, which had already been hurt by the treatment she had received from her father

respecting her religious scruples, at least she could not now confide in him as she had been wont in times past. The awful catastrophe of Farquhar, also, she thought might be the prelude of her own fate, for she did not know what lengths they might go in their hatred to Christianity ; but as she was conscious of no crime she had committed, and had only indulged herself in inquiries and comparisons, she thought it hard to be exposed to the danger of such terrible punishment, and she knew her father was stern enough to carry even this into execution if he once thought of it, notwithstanding his former affection for her.

On these melancholy considerations Ethne did not think herself safe to return for the present to her father, and determined to leave the grove privately, and conceal herself somewhere, till there might be some fortunate change of affairs. She engaged the forester to get from the grove one of the girls who was much attached to her, and disguising herself as well as she could, she and her compa-

nion struck into an unfrequented route through the forest at nightfall. On the forester's fidelity she could thoroughly depend, and through him she transmitted word to her father that she was going to seclude herself for some time from the world, till she could resolve the scruples she had told him of respecting the bloody sacrifices of Druidism. She felt a strong compunction of heart, however, in thus giving pain to her aged father ; and she only could support the struggle on the principles she had been taught by Farquhar, to give up all for the cross. She was not, indeed, altogether a Christian, but she was, like Agrippa, almost persuaded to renounce idolatry, and bear testimony to the truth of the gospel. Need we add, that the first law of nature, self-preservation, had also a strong effect on her mind ; for she anticipated her own destruction should she remain at the grove under her present circumstances of entertaining heretical doubts.

When the thought first occurred to her of

leaving the grove, she knew not well whither to go. To return to the palace, and put herself under the protection of the young princess, would throw her father into the utmost distraction, and she could not bear the thought of giving him pain, though he had treated her so inhumanly in the case of poor Farquhar. Love lent its aid to fix her in this determination, but delicacy of feeling forbade her to go where she would meet the prince. She was not aware that he was at that very time in the hands of Calve Mulloy at Dunluce. This delicacy then, which true lovers only can feel, prevented her from doing what every other consideration so strongly prompted her to do, and she bethought herself of some other place of retreat. Tralooney-grove was at some distance, and she had confidence in some of the Druids there who bore her great affection; but none of them would dare to disobey her father, and would give her up at the first summons. Bryan's cabin she also thought of, and the kind little girl who had saved her

from her pursuers would, she doubted not, prove a faithful watch against those her father might send in search of her ; but she had no certainty of finding the solitary situation of Glendalagh ; and, besides, Bryan was with the prince when he had put her ashore at Dunluce, and he might, for aught she knew, not have returned to the cabin.

When she had exhausted all that could be thought for and against these different plans, and found none of them would answer her intentions, the wild retreat of Clogharnbrec occurred to her as the most suitable in every respect. It was a place the least likely of all others to be searched by her father's people, and the little chamber would afford herself and her companion a snug dwelling. For Clogharnbrec, therefore, she directed her steps through ways the least frequented which she could think of, and her faithful companion, glad of a change from the dull uniformity of life she had led at the grove, cheerfully underwent all the fatigues of the journey. The

forester had furnished Ethne with a bow and arrows, which she had been taught to use with dexterity in the chase, and he accompanied her through the woods till day-break, by which time she had reached a place secure from pursuit, when he left her to continue her journey. She was prudent enough not to let him know whither she intended to go ; for though she did not think he would betray her, she thought it better not to put him under the temptation.

Malthuine had now greatly recovered from his bruises, by the care of Calye Mulloy and her old haridans, who had not failed, during his confinement, to take every possible means to insure his return to the faith of his ancestors. She had found it necessary to become a little more explicit with regard to his endangering the life of a young lady by his obstinacy ; for she found, on repeated observation and attention to his thought, that he was more afraid for his sister coming into danger than for Ethne. But when he found that

the Vaid pointed at the Druidess, he was driven into such distraction that he did not know what he was doing, and went into every extravagance of frenzy, so much more powerful was love than brotherly affection. He demanded to be carried instantly to the grove, and he would submit to whatever terms they might choose to prescribe, so that Ethne might be preserved from danger.

Calye Mulloy was alarmed at the frenzied looks of the prince : and she had not foreseen the violent effects which her words would produce, and she now endeavoured to soften them as much as she could, to sooth the tumult of the lover's feelings, till she effected her darling design. She was aware, that if the Arch-Druid got notice of her movements, all she had already done would be overturned, for he would, at all hazards, she knew, abide by his promise to Erc O'Neil, though the prince, if he returned to Druidism, would have more influence to support its cause than the powerful rebel. It was not, therefore,

among her plans to bring Malthuine directly to the grove, and to betray his love, which she saw he could not conceal. She conceived that it would be more practicable to manage the whole affair in her own rocky domain, and she began to contrive how she might seduce a priest from the grove to perform the requisite ceremonies for readmitting the prince ; and, what was of no less importance, to marry the lovers privately.

The Vaid accordingly set out for the grove to bring this goodly design to a conclusion, and left the lover in a state of mind which can more easily be conceived than described. He fondly called up every look and every word of Ethne's which he had indelibly treasured in his memory, and from time to time paused over with all the sweet delirium of love ; and he sighed with unutterable sorrow when he thought that she should suffer mishap, and perhaps death, through his means. He valued his own life as nothing when compared with the preservation of his Ethne ; for

his love was of that romantic cast which threw all selfish feelings of his own pleasure wholly into the shade, and if he had had a thousand lives, he would cheerfully have laid them all down to procure her happiness. He was even so much afraid of the danger the old prophetess had mysteriously hinted at, that he could scarcely master the violence of his feelings, and thought every moment an age till he made the sacrifice of his Christianity to redeem her from the threatened peril.

Calye Mulloy arrived at the grove on the morning after Ethne had left it, and all was dismay and confusion in Brassail's establishment from her unexpected elopement. Brassail himself had never suspected that his daughter loved the prince, or he would, without hesitation, have thought that she was gone with him. It was no secret, however, at the grove,—how it came there we have not heard,—but Calye Mulloy soon showed those who were giving hints of this, that it was impossible Ethne could be with the prince, as he had,

to her certain knowledge, she said, been confined with bruises for many days. All her knowledge of futurity was unluckily, in the present instance, of no avail, for she could give no hint whither Ethne was gone ; indeed, she had set her mind so much on having her immediately wed to the prince, to bring him over to Druidism and disappoint O'Neil, but most of all to be avenged on the Catholics, that this unforeseen obstacle disarranged all her thoughts, and threw her off her guard. Brassail had consulted all his various modes of augury, but had obtained nothing but the most discordant results ; and every quarter had been searched to no purpose. The old Arch-Druid was inconsolable, and blamed himself sore for not acting with more mildness and caution in the case of Farquhar, for he had no doubt that this was the main cause of Ethne's flight.

Calye Mulloy returned to Dunluce in great perplexity ; and, though she had much command over her countenance, she found it im-

possible to conceal her uneasiness from the prince, whom she found not at Dunluce, but on the high bank of the Coluisge, anxiously waiting her return, his bruises being so much better that he could now walk abroad. The Vaid even thought that the prince might have some knowledge of Ethne's concealment, as she had more than once observed, that lovers seldom leave one another long in ignorance of each other's abode. She, accordingly, told Malthuine what had happened, and wished him to do all he could to preserve Ethne from becoming a Christian, as she—Calye Mulloy—foresaw that such a step would be the instant destruction of both the lovers, that is, she anxiously wished it might be so.

This intelligence made Malthuine quite frantic, and he now began to distrust the Vaid's threatenings of danger, when he heard that the young Druidess was supposed to have gone over to the Catholic party. He wished from his soul it might be true, and determined forthwith to set out for Tara, as he had a

thought that Ethne might have fled to his sister for protection, in consequence of their former intercourse when she saved his life at Clogharnbree. The Vaid did all she could to oppose his departure, and even threatened him with pursuit from O'Neil's people should he go contrary to her desire ; but the prince either did not hear or did not listen to her, and darted away towards the south, altogether unmindful of his bruises, leaving the old lady to chafe out her rage and rummage her store of prophecies to divine the result of his sudden movement.

The Vaid, as you may well imagine, was agitated by all the possible quandaries of anger and disappointed revenge. Her small black falcon's eyes gleamed furiously from their bony sockets ; her weather-beaten countenance changed by fits from the hue of a withered oak-leaf to that of a boiled lobster, or an ill-burnt brick ; and her wrinkled cheeks rose and fell like the flank of a hunted rabbit, or, "*parva componere magnis*," like the

commoved heavings of an earthquake. It is to be supposed, that when the outward frame of Calye Mulloy showed such marks of disturbance, in the usual functions thereof, that “the spirit which sat behind the elements,” * in the inner chambers of her mortal tabernacle, could not be in a state of grim repose. Indeed, all the powers of knowledge which went to the making up of her mind,—and I leave their enumeration to the Scottish sages,—were driving about through her brain with jostling and random velocity, like the dancing of the notes which people the sunbeams, or a shoal of herring-fry tossed about in the billows of a tempest. There was no redeeming circumstance to allay the turmoil; for she had placed her last stake on Malthuine’s conversion, and he had, she doubted, for ever escaped her. She had, therefore, no other resource than to wend homeward to Dunluce, where she stowed her-

* A favourite phrase with the Author of *Discourses on the Modern Astronomy*.

self within the walls of her sanctum sanctorum, and sat herself down with her long, lank, skinny fingers, placed along her cheeks by way of prop, and in this position she remained immoveable for a long space of time, being probably employed in the laudable avocation of “nursing her wrath to keep it warm.”* Here, however, we must leave Calye Mulloy to *digest* her disappointment, (as Dr Cross would say,) and follow the prince in his way to Tara.

Such of my readers as may be in love will now be ready to anticipate a romantic and tender meeting of the two lovers, in some sequestered and beautiful wood, with “no eye to watch, and no tongue to wound”† them; or, perhaps, while the lady is attacked with wild-beasts or ruffians, the prince should arrive at the exact moment to save her by his valour; but I am sorry that my documents

* Tam o' Shanter.

† Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

contain no account of such, otherwise I should have been glad to gratify them. For this disappointment, however, we may possibly make them some amends before we take our final leave of them ; for we are aware, that lovers insatiably thirst after the adventures of others who have felt the same sweet passion.

The prince arrived at the palace almost without knowing what space he had travelled over, his thoughts had been so much engrossed with the idea of his Ethne wandering helpless and persecuted through the forests. He was the more distressed, that he was in doubt whether to credit the foretellings of Calye Mulloy, or to reject them as the vain babbling of a lunatic, or the cunning devices of artful jugglery. Had his faith in the Christianity he was taught been stedfast and unwavering, he could have readily decided this ; but principles, however sound, and however strongly impressed on the mind, are feeble when they have to combat a ruling and headlong passion, which breaks away from every restraint, and

tinges every thought with its own colouring. Ethne was not a Christian, and her lover was careless whether he continued under the banners of the cross or not ; if he could but gain her—if he could by any means annul or break her unfortunate betrothement to O'Neil. The hint, however, he had received from the old Vaid of the supposed apostacy of Ethne to Christianity, had a wonderful effect in confirming his faith, and of weakening his dread of the danger threatened in the mysterious prophecies. He exulted in the thoughts that Ethne would, by this decisive step, be for ever severed from the Druidical party, and that, consequently, her marriage with the rebel chief would be no longer thought of, whatever promises had been given. His only fear was that it might not be true, or, if it were, that it had been brought about by the handsome Farquhar, (of whose awful fate he was ignorant,) and that she might have eloped with him from the grove. No sooner did this thought suggest itself, than it put all others to flight ;

for jealousy is, if possible, even a more engrossing passion than pure, untarnished love. The prince's jealousy, however, had but little to feed its whetted appetite, for he was not even certain whether Farquhar had ever been received at the grove ; but when the thought had once been raised in his mind, it was no easy matter to again lay it asleep, and it added much to his perplexity.

It is one of the inconsistencies of human passions, that jealousy increases rather than abates love, at least in such uncertain cases as this was, and the prince never felt his affection stronger than now, when he was in doubt whether Ethne had profaned her pledged affection by attaching herself to the handsome missionary. It is singular that he never was jealous of O'Neil, of whom, we may suppose, he might have been more afraid, that he should rob him of the fair Druidess. The truth is, that though Ethne had never expressly told him her dislike of the rebel chief, her actions left him in no doubt of the state of

her mind on this point, and jealousy can never have place when the affections are known to be alienated from the person who might otherwise have been the cause of this fiendish passion. The prince, therefore, would have as readily become jealous of his own father as of O'Neil ; but the case was very different with Farquhar, and he feared the effect of his graceful address and his handsome figure, more than all the power which the rebel chief could exert through his Druidical connections.

When he arrived at the palace, he flew instantly to his lovely sister, who had been lamenting for him all the time of his mysterious absence. She was overjoyed to see him safe, but he gave her such a look of impatient wildness, that she shrunk back from his embrace in terror, for she had no doubt that his brain was unsettled.

“ Where is Ethne ? ” were the first words he could give utterance to, and he looked round with frenzied eagerness to see if he could discover the object of his search.

“Ethne? my dear brother,” replied the princess, “what should I know of Ethne?”

“Is she not with you?—was she not here?—do you not know where she is?” cried the prince in great agitation.

“Compose yourself, my dear brother,” replied Aoine trembling, “your wild looks terrify me.”

“Answer me quickly,” cried Malthuine with fury; “is she here?”

“Alas, no,” said the princess, “nor have I seen her since she went away with you last winter.”

Malthuine stood a moment speechless with a look of despair, clenched his hands, and fixed his eyes on vacancy. All his conjectures were confirmed by this disappointment, and we may not say what deeds of horror he meditated to do in this tempest of soul.

“Is——is——Far——quhar here?” he muttered, gasping thick at every letter of the detested name he forced himself to pronounce.

“No,” said his alarmed and timid sister.

This was still a deeper stab to the feelings of the prince ; for it put his suppositions beyond a doubt. Ethne was now lost to him for ever, and what was there besides in the blank of the world's wilderness that was worth living for ? Her image had been the light that beamed on his soul from the moment he had beheld her angelic form in the little chamber at Cloghambree, and it had dimmed all his other thoughts and feelings. He had lived but for her, and thought but of her ; and all his future hopes had centered in seeing her a partaker of his happy home, and guiding his steps through the sunny gardens of life, like one of the bright nymphs of paradise which had left the sky to bless his journeyings, and fill the air around him with delight. Such was the fairy vision of his hopes, and such are the dreams, which, like an angel visit, at some sunshine moment of every man's life, rise on the soul in all the beauty and brightness of a heavenly landscape. We look on the prospect with rapture—we are dazzled with its splen-

dour, and think that, like eternity, it will shine without ending in undiminished brightness. We look again and the dream is gone : Time has swept away all its beauties from the delighted eye of fancy, and we are left to contemplate nothing but the wild bleakness of winter desolation.

The prince was thus awakened from his lovely dream, and stood like one who had been miraculously recalled from the grave. At this moment little Norah came hastily into the room, her face looking big with intelligence.

“What is the matter, Norah?” said the princess eagerly, expecting nothing less than to see Ethne ushered into the chamber, her fancy had been so roused by her brother’s passionate inquiries.

“Nothing at all’s the matter, madam,” replied the little girl, “only them Druids have been after murdering Farquhar, that every body said was so handsome.”

“When?—How?” cried the prince with troubled hurry.

“ It was M’Gurdie that was telling it,” said Norah, “ and he says they foun’ him out to be a Christian, and to have private meetings with one of the Druidesses. I’m sure if she was as good a lady as her that was at Glendalagh once’t, she wudn’t have done so if it hadn’t been proper. I’ll never forget her the longest day I have to live.”

This innocent palliative, however, was but a feeble check to the tumultuous working of the prince’s jealousy. Every new circumstance added a deeper colouring to his passion, and this account which Norah had heard set all his doubts at rest. He stood for a moment fixed in deep and silent thought, and at last his bosom heaving as if it had freed itself from a load, he said with stern firmness,

“ It is well.” And turning an inquiring look to his sister, asked when the army was to muster.

He had with strong resolution freed himself from the chain which he now deemed un-

worthy to bind him ; for even Ethne he could not love when she had thus disgraced herself by bestowing her regards on a subaltern missionary ; and he resolved forthwith to join the army, and forget if possible her falsehood and his wrongs in the bustle of war. The resolution, however, was easier taken than carried into effect, for

— ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued ;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever : it may be a sound—
A tone of music,—summer's eve,—or spring,
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith were darkly bound ;

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renewed, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view

The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,
The cold—the changed—perchance the dead—anew
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too many!—yet
how few!—

LORD BYRON.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the nets which they have hid,
Their own feet fast are snar'd.

Scottish version of the Psalms.

Look man before thee how thy death hasteth,
Look man behind thee how thy life wasteth.

Old Epitaph apud HEARSE.

THE response which young Fergus had received from Merlin produced a strong effect on the mind of Ere O'Neil, who, with all his ambition, was unsteady and vacillating in his plans ; and, sceptical as he by turns appeared, he paid great deference to supernatural intelligence, particularly when it foreboded him good fortune. Merlin's response, though you may think it somewhat enigmatical or ambiguous, was to O'Neil as clear as sunshine ; for the battle was plainly to terminate in the

discomfiture of the king's army, the slaughter of the principal chiefs hostile to Druidism, and the death of the king himself or the prince, (he could not determine which,) with his own triumphant coronation and espousals with the fair Druidess. He understood from the response, however, that the contest would be a bloody one, and he accordingly resolved to be prepared to meet it with as strong a body of troops as it was possible to muster. In consequence of this, the most active movements were going forward in all the dependencies and among all the allies of O'Neil, and the most formidable preparations were made to give them all possible superiority over the Royalists.

In the midst of this military bustle, the news came that his betrothed bride had fled from the grove, and nobody could divine whither she was gone. About this, however, he now gave himself little concern, for he had the infallible prophecy of Merlin that the queen of Erin should not be wed till after the grand

conflict was decided ; and he doubted not that Ethne would be found in time enough to grace his triumph and his throne. Her flight had produced one good effect in his favour, as it had redoubled the exertions of the Druids against the Christians, to whom they imputed her elopement. Old Brassail was almost frantic with grief ; and the only consolation he had was the terrible vengeance which was ready to pour on the heads of Saint Patrick and his detested followers, the Royalists.

While the aspect of the north looked so gloomy and threatening to the peace of the kingdom, the movements in the south were no less warlike. Kriomthan had learned the imposition which had been practised on himself and his royal captive by the crafty Druids of Loch Dar, and the resolution that Logaire had in consequence taken of breaking the unhallowed oath, * and retrieving his tarnished

* See O'Connor's Keating, Reign of Leogaire.

honour by taking the field against him. Kriomthan was no less enraged at the imposition of the priests than Logaire ; but he saw no reason why the monarch should on that account violate his agreement. At all events, he was determined to maintain the independence of his own little kingdom of Leinster, or to die gloriously in its defence. Like a true patriot, however, he was unwilling to make Leinster the seat of war, for he could not bear to have his good subjects driven from their peaceful dwellings by an invading army, and their property exposed to plunder and devastation. He deemed it better to make the fields of his enemies the scene of tumult, and being averse to be the first aggressor, he accordingly kept himself in readiness to march into the territories of Logaire on the first intimation of hostile movements on the part of the monarch.

Taca was thus threatened with hostilities on all sides, and the king was not slow in mustering a powerful force to meet the storm. His

defeat and capture at Loch Dar had taught him the useful lesson of being as much on his guard against an inferior foe as against one who was mightier ; and he was not in much danger of again running his head blindly into a snare. His attention was mainly directed to strengthen the fortifications of Tara, that, in the event of being defeated in battle, his troops might have a secure refuge in the numerous raths which stood around the palace, and gave a formidable appearance to the beautiful hill. The troops, therefore, which had assembled at Tara were not idle, being actively employed in strengthening the raths till the arrival of those from the more distant quarters of the kingdom. The prince, following up his resolution, was unwearied in his attention to the works ; and as he refused to give any explicit account of his late disappearance, his father was altogether astonished at this sudden turn from eccentric whims to military activity. Night, however, never failed to renew the love visions he had formerly

cherished, and he frequently spent the sleepless hours in bitter sorrow till the return of morning called him forth again to direct his brave companions at the works.

While these grand preparations were making against the public enemy, they were not aware that a more insidious foe lurked in the very bosom of the Court. Malthuine, indeed, in the tumult of the passions which had so recently torn his heart, had totally forgot the alarm he had felt for the safety of his sister ; and when he found her safe at his return, he never thought more of the bloody sacrifice of which he had heard from the peasant at the grove. It was not, however, abandoned, though they had hitherto been unsuccessful in all their attempts to carry off the unsuspecting princess. The Lokite and his accomplices were, nevertheless, indefatigable ; and when they were baffled in one device, they had twenty others in reserve to put in practice at leisure. But the time was approaching when it became absolutely necessary to get

this poor girl to the horrid grove ; for if she could not be got before the Beltein * festival, it behoved them to delay it for a whole year, and that would be but ill relished by their wicked suborners.

. It was found that little Norah was a particular obstacle in their way, for she was never absent from the princess, attending her in all her walks, and even remaining with her at night. They had more than once determined to carry off both the princess and her favourite maid, but about this they could never agree ; for the Lokite, who was the prime mover of the conspiracy, had still a secret friendship for Angus, notwithstanding their quarrel and the tricks he had played him, on which account he was unwilling to go so far as rob him of his charming sweetheart, though he would not have objected to any trick which

* In the Erse or Irish, *Bel* or *Beil* is the contraction of *Bea'uile*, and means the fountain, or source, or living principle of all things, that is, God. *Tein* is a fire.

would have been productive of torment and annoyance of an inferior degree.

The princess sometimes visited the arbour in the royal gardens, where, it may be remembered, Angus was wont to come to whisper his love tales in the ear of his Norah. This was no sooner observed than the conspirators resolved to place an ambush there ; for the gardens communicated so closely with the forest of Tara in this quarter, that they might possibly get her out of the reach of pursuit before she could be missed, or at least they might have her concealed in some remote and pathless thicket till night should veil their journey. With this design they had watched assiduously for several days, but the princess by good luck did not chance to come within their power. When they were beginning to lose hopes of succeeding, they at length saw her flitting through the garden paths like a lovely sylph who had stepped into view from the bosom of the air. Her pretty maid was behind her, and looked more like her twin sis-

ter than her humble attendant. The light-hearted and unthinking girls tript forward to the arbour in all the lively spirit of glee and frolic which so often dances in the young breast. The blood thirsty ruffians, chuckled with savage delight when they saw their prey thus ready to rush into the net ; and they even began to rejoice that Norah was also a part of their spoil, for she would be a rich reward for their exertions. Somebody else also thought that Norah would be a rich reward, not indeed for ruffian barbarity, but for tried and genuine affection. The warm love of the youthful Caledonian led him to haunt the neighbourhood of the arbour whenever his duty required not his attendance elsewhere, for there he could linger and muse on the fond endearments of his blushing maid, and often she would steal on him as if by accident, and, pretending surprise, would run to conceal herself under some leafy canopy, or in some flower enclosure, where she well knew the youth would speedily discover her.

—Fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.

VIRG. *Eclog.* III.

Imitated by Pope.

She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen ;

While a kind glance at her pursuer flies :

How much at variance are her feet and eyes !

Pastorals, I.

Angus had by good fortune come to the little sequestered nook behind the arbour, where it was his wont to station himself when Norah walked with the princess, that he might charm his eye with gazing on her fairy form gliding among the flowering shrubs of the garden, when the presence of her royal mistress forbade his nearer approach. Angus had once even dared to love the princess herself, and we have already seen a warm eulogium which he made in her praise to Bryan when they arrived at Dalriogh.* This, however, like all hopeless passions of this kind, melted insensibly into the tender respect of brotherly affection, and his love for the little maid had supplanted his flame for her lovely mistress.

When the youth, therefore, who had seen

the two pretty maids take the way of the gardens, came to his accustomed place of watch, and found it preoccupied by the conspirators, he was not a little amazed, and did not know we'll whether to advance or retreat. As retreat, however, would, he thought, disclose his intention in coming there, a thing he did not much relish, he boldly advanced and accosted the disconcerted villains with,

“ Heth, chaps, I canna but say ye ha’e ta’en a queer eneugh bit tae dern in o’, sae mony o’ ye. What may ye be ettlin’, gin a body may be sae baul’ as speer, hurklin’ and vizzyin’ that gate like a wheen pointer douds settin’ paitricks ?”

This was rather a puzzling question ; and had it been asked at Angus himself, it is likely he would have been no less nonplussed to answer than they were. One of the number, however, took upon him to reply,

“ Why, we com’d juist to look for a trifle of venison, if we cud fin’ ever a deer that wud be straying about.”

“ Oh, that’s all joke now,” said another archly, “ only ye wudn’t like to be telling that we were all over and over to larn the art of catching a purty girl from Angus there.”

This Hibernian stroke was too much for the Caledonian, who blushed up to the eyes, and, pretending to overlook the sally of the second speaker, stammered out in great embarrassment,

“ Eh?—weel!—ha’e ye seen ony o’ thae deer ye ha’e been lookin’ for? I dinna care muckle tae tak’ a gliff at them mysel’, gin ye like tae haud me at my heghtin’; f’ri’thet, an ye think I’m in cummer-room I’ll no bode mysel’ tae bide.”

The cunning Hibernians, as soon as they saw that Angus was put to confusion by the well-timed allusion to his courtship, tried all their art to get rid of him; for he assuredly never was more in cumber-room in his life. While they were thus “ chafflin’ back an’ for’a’t,” as Angus would have described their

conversation, the princess and her pretty attendant arrived at the arbour, and hearing an altercation of voices behind it, they were quite surprised, as it was so remote and secluded, that such an occurrence had never before been known there.

“What is the matter?” said the princess, as she eagerly stept round the corner of the arbour to satisfy herself of the cause of this unwonted noise.

“Why, your highness,” said one of the villains, “there isn’t much at all the matter, only some of us boys there com’d out to the forest after a bit of venison, if it’s no offence, your highness?”

Angus hung back awkwardly and blushing, for Norah was already at the side of her royal mistress, and the youth felt as if their sweet and stolen meetings in the arbour had all been exposed to public gaze by this unaccountable event.

The conspirators were more than once non-

plussed, by the fat butler accidentally traversing their schemes : once, in particular, when they sanguinely expected that nothing could balk them, this living tun of liquor rolled itself across their path in all its unwieldiness. The circumstances were these :

The king, to keep up the high spirit of the troops, granted them by turns a little fête, that they might make merry together, and derive new life and increased bravery from the song and the dance ; for, it must be remembered, that this was not the age when feasting and merriment produced effeminacy among warriors. Even the festal dances, where heroes mingled steps with the “ twinkling feet” of beauty, rather gave vigour to their courage than spread among them the tame unwarlike spirit which so invariably follows refinement and luxury ; but in these modern days of gunpowder war we can form only a faint idea of the men whose single arm would often hew a passage with the sword through the embattled ranks of their foes. Logaire was prudent

enough to make these festal parties small, that there might be left an efficient force to garrison the raths in case of surprise ; but as the turn of all was impartially appointed by lot, none were offended.

The night on which it was the turn of the division that Angus ranked in to partake of the royal indulgence, was eagerly and anxiously looked forward to by the Lokite and his crew as by far the best suited to their dark design which had occurred since they began their machinations ; for Norah would be absent with her lover—and the lattice of the chamber was weak—and the bustle of the fête—all concurred to assist their wicked purpose.—The night came. Angus, with a heart full of love and joy, led forth his Norah in all the blushing and artless simplicity of sixteen, to join the gay revelry of the dance, and, to his eyes at least, her beauty was peerless. Little did the kind hearted and affectionate maid suspect the diabolical plot which was now ripening against her royal mistress.

The Lokite had placed his myrmidons in grim ambush under the princess's lattice to be ready to execute their design the moment that he had excited some disturbance, by way of a diversion to call off the attention of all idlers, while they should escape with their prize into the woods. But unluckily for this goodly and well devised scheme, the existence of O'Grushelan was not calculated upon, and that portly personage, in defiance of occasional oversettings, and consequent *roulements*, still continued to discuss his luncheons of fat beef, and to facilitate the passage thereof to the digestive regions by large potations of the *spiritus vite*. Antiquarians are not agreed whether this liquor be at present known, some thinking that *spiritus* is a corrupt reading for *aqua*, which is the monkish rendering of the Erse *uisgé* in the old records, while others think that the reading is right and *aqua* corrupt; for the Latin *aqua* cannot be rendered any thing but water, whereas *uisge* signifies both water and fermented liquor. Be this as

it may, O'Grushelan had on the night in question swilled pretty freely of said spiritus, and was, in consequence, rather more tumbleable even than usual. Now his way to the cellar lay directly by the side of the wall where the Lokite had placed his wicked ambuscade, and from the stupidity which buzzed in his brain, the butler had never thought of the utility of a torch to light his steps ; besides, the only portion of thought which remained unextinguished within him was fixed upon a fresh pull of liquor, rich and fuming from the most recondite recess of the vaults, for the purpose of hushing to rest the uncomfortable turmoil which had somehow or other arisen between a former stowage of beef and uisgé in his own cellar of digestibles.

Things being in this state of preparation : the Lokite ready to begin his feint and the ambush to burst through the lattice on the helpless princess, the butler, unwieldy as he was, got the start of the plotters, and anticipated the Lokite by tumbling into the midst

of the ambushade. More frightened the wretches could not have been, if O'Grushelan had fallen in a sheet of fire from the sky ; indeed, they did not know whether he might not be some aërial wight in the Catholic interest, come expressly to defeat their plan, and they all took to their heels and fled, leaving O'Grushelan to get up the best way he could. But it was not within the compass of his ability to accomplish such a feat, and he lay groaning most piteously in a tone partaking by turns of the shrill squeak of a hunted hedgehog and the grunt of a sick badger.

Angus, who had been in no hurry to join the revels, was standing in an adjoining recess of the wall, urging his suit with all the soft persuasion his timidity left him power to use ; sighs, namely, and whispered words, and all the other sweet eloquence of love's language, while Norah heard him with fondness, but cautiously kept her thoughts veiled in modesty, though the covering was often too transparent to conceal all. As the lovers

were thus forgetting the revels in mutual endearments, the signals of distress which the overturned butler was sending forth in quest of help broke upon their ear like the tumultuous brawl of a mountain stream on the sweet dwelling of the woodland echoes. The lover instantly recognised the piping cry of O'Grushelan, and had no difficulty in conjecturing what had befallen him, but he was unwilling to leave the dear arms of Norah, now unconsciously entwined around him, for the purpose of assisting the distressed knight of the cellar. The little girl was no less enchanted in this paradise of melting sighs and heaving bosoms; but she had a mischievous delight in abridging these moments of blissful feeling which pure and virtuous affection alone can ever know, perhaps because modesty checked her in giving way to the rapture of such fond caresses, or perhaps nature taught her, that, by shortening the time and increasing the difficulty of obtaining, the delight would be enhanced. For some such reason she dis-

engaged herself from the youth's embrace, and insisted on him going to the butler's relief. A fond lover knows not how to refuse either the requests or the commands of his mistress : Angus went, and was accosted, as soon as his footstep was heard, by the man of many-falls,

“ Ogh, my swaet honey, if ye ever did a piece of charity since your mother waen'd you, it wud be to give me a bit of a hoist, till I wud get my bacerers brought to rights again ; had luck to them spalpeens that put themselves in the way of tripping up an honest man, that wudn't blow over a blind kitten if it stud in his road ! ” — Angus interrupted him with,

“ Ye aul', daft, deleerit, drucken, daver't, doitet, wuddiefu' o' fozy beef, are ye there again waumlin' an' rowin' i'the yirth like a sackfu' o' half-smo'or't rabbits ? De'il ! an it wadna be mair o' a gude-turn tae gi'e the wuzzen o' ye a chirt nor tae set ye on your en' again, just tae be stoiterin' an fa'in' o'er

the first bit clod or humplock it taks your fit, an' deavin' a' about you wi' your gowloghin' and grainin' ; it's eneugh tae gar a sow scunner tae hear your golders."

" Ogh, and to be sure," said the butler, " if it had been myself that tum'I'd ye might have said so rightly ; but I cud have stud as fast as the hill, only in respect of them villains of robbers that lay in wait to make me stum'le ; it wudn't be badly done, the Tories, to put them for the making of a month on bread and water ;" a diet, by the way, which, in the opinion of O'Grushelan, afforded little better than a living death.

During this elegant dialogue, Norah came up to throw in a word for the poor man in the mud, her usual reserve being to-night not so necessary, as every body knew she was to be the partner of Angus at the fête.

This notable device of the conspirators was, in consequence of this unforeseen occurrence, thoroughly defeated, and they were again obliged, as Angus would have said, " to begin

new bode new play.” The Lokite’s fertile brain hit upon a scheme which would at once punish the poor butler for his untimeous interruption, and effectuate their grand design of wickedness. His scheme was, to dig a deep pit as privately as possible across one of the paths to the cellars, where few but O’Grushelan himself ever passed, and to drive into it a sharp stake, on which the entrapt butler might be empaled. This being properly prepared, the fat victim was to be enticed to go in that direction after night-fall, and having been caught, the conspirators were to carry off the princess and her pretty attendant during the confusion which would thence be created, and escape with all haste to the forest.

The Lokite took upon himself the office of leading O’Grushelan into the snare and aiding his cries for help; for the inmates of the palace had of late become so accustomed to these signals of distress, that he was afraid even the additional emphasis which he intended the stake

to produce on his organs of sound would not be sufficient to create an alarm. The Lokite also intended to make his escape on this occasion ; for several of his pranks had begun to take air, and his safety was thence brought into danger.

The pit was dug—the stake set—and the night came which was to finish the catastrophe. The indefatigable Lokite got the butler on the path under pretence of showing him a method of accomplishing his own resurrection without assistance when he should chance to fall again ; but it would have been as well for this contriver of wickedness if he had known a way to extricate himself out of such a difficulty, for in his anxiety to lead on the butler to the pit, he forgot the spot where it was, and it being quite dark, the man of plots fell headlong into his own trap, and stuck fast on the bloody stake. He had come to make a feigned cry of distress had he got the butler ensnared ; but he now bawled out most hideously in good earnest. O'Grushelan very

humanely added his feeble note of alarm, and in a short time a crowd was collected around the chop-fallen Lokite, and he was rescued from the piercing stake, which had entered under his ribs and wounded him very dangerously, for he wanted the corpulent covering which would have protected the more inward parts of the butler had he chanced to fall upon the stake.

The other conspirators, however, knew nothing of their chief's disaster, and thinking he had been successful burst through the lattice of the princess, and bore her off in savage triumph, notwithstanding her struggles. Norah was accidentally out of the way, and they stifled the cries of their victim with her own garments till they got her far into the forest ; and it was several hours before the alarm was given that she was missing, and it was then too late to trace the route of the villains.

When the Lokite was taken to his own apartments, he was in all the horrors of approaching death, his wound was so excru-

ciating, and his consciousness of crimes so appalling. He disburdened his mind of part of the load which oppressed it, by confessing his annoyance of the church-builders, his wicked pranks on the unsuspecting Norah, and others of a similar kind; but he could not bring himself to disclose any thing concerning the princess as long as he had any glimmering hope of life remaining, as he knew well such disclosure would be an immediate passport to the next world. His resolution of confessing his part in this horrid conspiracy was in the end taken too late, for he became speechless before he could make himself understood, and expired in great agony.

CHAPTER IX.

Sommè fløyè oster, og sommè fløyè vester,
Noglè fløyè nør paa ;
Noglè fløyè ned i dybenè dalè,
Jeg troer de erè der endnu.

Danish Ballad.

Held on their course with stayed stedfastnesse
Ne ever shroncke, ne ever sought to bayt.

Facry Queene.

THE moment the alarm of the loss of Aoine reached the prince, it flashed on him, that all the fears he had formerly felt for her, and which he had of late so unpardonably neglected, were but too well founded. The thought was madness. All his lingering feelings of bitter regret for the loss of the fair Ethne were in an instant extinguished, and he could only think of his lovely sister dragged away

by unprincipled ruffians, to be made the victim of a hellish superstition. He became quite frantic ; but his frenzy only made him the more precipitately eager to retrieve his culpable neglect. He was almost delirious, but it only added to his headlong activity to begin the pursuit. He flew to the stables, threw himself on the first horse he could find, and was so far on his way before the king himself knew what had happened. Several of the warriors who saw his frantic haste followed his example, and were soon at his side. Angus was a minute later in learning the invaluable loss ; but as he heard it with deep sobbing from his own Norah, whose young heart was bursting with unutterable anguish, he flew rather than rode after the sorrowing prince.

“ Haste, Angus, O haste !” was the anxious entreaty of the afflicted little girl, and it almost made him forget that it was impracticable to dart like an arrow through the air.

The prince followed the by-path through

the woods which he himself had travelled when he went to the north, thinking it was by far the most likely route the villains would pursue. But with all his anxious expedition he either missed the track or was outstript in speed, for he could discover no trace of them the whole of the day.

Every appearance of human retreat was narrowly scanned, and all the by-paths were scoured, yet all was unsuccessful. Often they were deceived into the belief that they were close upon the wicked crew, when they heard the voice of a solitary hunter in the wood, or descried some dark thicket fit to conceal the deeds of rapine. Once the prince's eye caught a stream of blue smoke rising from a copse on the side of a green hill before them, and believing that they had now at last discovered the robbers, he dashed impetuously forward, till he reached the spot. There he discovered, not his captive sister, but a party of deer-hunters, sitting round a fire by the side of a spring of fresh water, which issued

out of the brow of the hill. They were feasting heartily on the venison they had killed in the chace, and offered the prince a welcome share of their repast. But he was too impatient to rescue his sister to have any thoughts of his own gratification, and when the hunters could give him no intelligence of her, he turned hastily and disconsolate down the slope of the hill to continue his fruitless pursuit. His attendants had more respect for the good things of this life, and though they did not alight, they thankfully accepted a luncheon of venison each, and took care to gratify their appetites therewith as they rode after the prince.

It was wearing towards evening when the pursuers arrived at the edge of a pretty lake which glanced in the bosom of the forest with the light of the setting sun. It was indeed a lovely spot, and it looked brighter, and the music of its waves came sweeter to the ear, through the dark umbrage of the woods, than if it had been in a bare and barren heath. The

shadow of a range of thick alders also fell over the water on its western edge, and heightened the splendour of the waves that danced and twinkled in the sun beyond it. It looked at first view wild and solitary, but as they advanced they found several small boats drawn up on the shore, and further on a group of neat cottages clustered among the trees. The prince hastened forward to this woodland village to make another inquiry—hopeless, indeed, for he now began to think that the unceasing speed he had used, must have carried him beyond the fugitives, had he been in the proper track. When he came nearer the cottages, his ear was saluted with the voice of psalms, rising in clear melody through the

* Those who have read Joannes Diaconus, will perhaps question the melody of the hymn. “Bibuli gutturi barbara teritas,” says he, speaking of the North, “dum inflexionibus et repercussionibus mitem nititur edere cantilenam naturæ quodam fragore *quasi plaustra per gradus confuse sonantia*, [like the rumbling of carts,] ri-

evening air, and melting away on the breezes that played over the lake. It was the evening hymn of the villagers, who were Christians, and had built their little cottages around one of the new churches which Saint Patrick had caused to be built in that enchanting spot ; and it was in the church they were all assembled, under the eye of the pastor whom the Apostle had appointed to instruct them. The prince was the more struck with the scene, that he had formerly been wont to see the borders of the lake, uninhabited and solitary ; but his feelings for his sister left him no time to speculate on the glorious improvement thus effected by the Saint. He dismounted and rushed into the church, without thinking of the interruption he gave to the sacred worship, and hurriedly asked the first person he

gidas voces jactat, sicque audientium animos, quos molire debuerat, exasperando magis, ac ostendendo, conturbat." Vit. Gregor. II. 7.

found, whether he could give him any tidings of his sister.

His inquiries were all fruitless ; none of the villagers of Lochallan had seen or heard of the villanous Druids, and the prince was forced to halt, for his jaded steed would carry him no farther, and he could not that night procure a fresh one. He determined, however, to set forward on foot to a pass, through which he was afraid they might escape during the night, and, if he arrived there before them, it would be easy to intercept their flight, however strong they might be. His followers were now also augmented by some of the most active villagers of Lochallan, who thought themselves honoured by the expedition.

The pass in question was called Kilconar, from a Druid recluse who had lived there in former times, and it lay some miles from Lochallan. It was near midnight when the prince and his party arrived there ; and they were almost overpowered with joy when they saw several fires kindled near the entrance of the

defile, for they were sure that they had now come upon the fugitives at last. Some of the more prudent, however, restrained the prince's impetuosity till they should ascertain whether it really were the villains they were in pursuit of, and also their numbers and position, that they might take every advantage to make sure work. For this purpose, one of the Lochallan men was chosen, who was acquainted with every foot of the ground.

His report was very different from what they had expected ; for, instead of the party who had carried off the princess, he found an encampment of Leinster warriors, who had the day before taken that position to intercept the northern reinforcements from reaching Tara, which their daring and independent king intended forthwith to attack. The prince would willingly have mustered his little band, and tried to dislodge this troop of foes, but his numbers were so much inferior, and the Leinstrians had chosen their position so well in the broken ground which faced the mouth of the

pass, that the attempt was deemed too hazardous. Neither could they with safety proceed any farther, and the prince, however unwillingly, was forced to return to the palace, to see whether those who had gone in a different direction from him had been more successful.

On his arrival at Tara, he found Bryan just returned from "making a sarch" no less unsuccessful than the prince's, though he had taken a different direction. "He had a notion," he said, "that the Tory villains had a mind to be out of raech of land if they cud, and he had taken to the shore, as if the devil had been after him, a purpose to catch a peep of them; but he hadn't been fit to sae a corner of their caps, if he had burst his heart for the doing it, only he heard like the splash of an oar in the sac, saving it wasn't the tum'ling of the waves, bad luck to them."

The consternation at the palace of Tara was extreme at this unforeseen and diabolical villany. The king was not, indeed, so frantic as the lively passions of the prince led *him* to

be ; but he was deeply grieved, though he did not rave and gesticulate, for he had learned to bear a serene brow becoming the monarch of Ireland, even when he had cause for great mental agitation. In the present case his difficulties were many and unmanageable. He had by inquiry and conjecture made out, that Aoine had been carried off by his northern enemies, and he would have instantly set out to rescue her at every hazard of personal danger ; for he yielded in heroism to no warrior in his kingdom. It came to his recollection, however, that he was a king as well as a father, and that he was responsible for the safety of the monarchy, which was so daringly threatened with insurrection and rebellion.

He was in daily expectations of a hostile visit from Kriomthan, who had deemed the undisguised preparations at Tara for renewing the war a sufficient cause not only to put himself in readiness to defend his territory, but to save it from invasion, by becoming himself the invader of the kingdom of Meath. His

activity in securing the important posts had been discovered by the prince at the pass of Kilconar, though the amount of his force was not known. Besides, Logaire had intelligence from the north that Ere O'Neil had collected a strong force, which he meant to bring to action with all possible speed. Nay, it was not known whether he had not already begun his march southward.

When the monarch took all these circumstances into consideration, it appeared absolute madness to attempt the rescue of the princess ; at least, it was impossible that he should succeed with any force he could muster. If the intelligence was correct that she was in the hands of the Druids ; before he could march a force northward sufficient to force the passes^o preoccupied by the Leinstrians, and of strength enough to cope with O'Neil, she would be secure within the walls of Rath na-Carraig, or concealed in some labyrinthical recess of the Druid groves, out of the reach of search or recovery. It was,

indeed, a hard case for a father ; but he saw nothing which he could do that would be of any advantage : he was forced with grief to submit to the sad misfortune of his lovely daughter.

Malthuine's feelings were torn more severely than his father's ; for they were naturally more susceptible of agitation ; and, besides, he had to reproach himself most bitterly with neglecting to make stricter inquiry into the strong suspicions which had been awakened in his mind, from what he had learned when he was in the north. Even the wild prophecies of Calye Mulloy now rose on his disturbed fancy, and added to his distress. It was quite impossible that the old Vaid could speak without a mystery ; and though she had, when urging him to apostatise from Christianity, taken pains to direct his thoughts to the beautiful Druidess, and had succeeded, yet, as she had never spoken so plainly as to be unambiguous, all her dark sayings came

back to his recollection as applying only to his beloved sister.

The prince was, perhaps, more free from superstition than most young men at his father's court ; owing, in a great measure, to the strong impulse given to his mind by the tenets of the new religion ; as nothing tends more to unhinge the fetters of superstitious belief than the diffusion of opinions at war with those which have been immemorially established. This effect, however, is confined chiefly to youthful minds ; for the old never lay aside the belief which has been instilled into them from childhood, even when their interest most powerfully sways them : they may conceal their thoughts, indeed, and they do so, but superstition never dies in the mind which has cherished it from infancy to manhood. In a proportionate degree, the same is true of all the several stages of life.

The prince was accordingly less superstitious than some of the elder courtiers, but he had imbibed enough of that poison of human

happiness to disquiet his mind whenever it was stirred into activity, and particularly when any thing occurred to distress him, or rouse his passions. The present event, therefore, accompanied as it was with the mysterious forebodings of the Calye Vaid, could not fail to make him gloomy and sorrowful ; and the more that he might have saved her by renouncing Christianity, at least, so said Calye Mulloy. And if he had done so in time, he also imagined, that he would not have been so cruelly widowed of his once beloved Ethne. *Once beloved !*—The thought told him that all his struggles to displace her image from his heart, had only served to stamp it the more imperishably ; and nothing served so much to show him how deeply his affection was rooted, than this terrible disaster. Grief and sorrow, and all the depressing passions, are a sure test of the force of love ; for the helplessness of distress always forces the mind to cling for relief to those it has linked with its happiness.

Such a state of feeling was intolerable to a person of so impatient a disposition as the prince, since he accused himself as the cause of all the evil that had happened. He even went so far as to execrate Saint Patrick and his tribe of missionaries, with all the doctrines and ceremonials which he had so carefully been taught by them ; and laid the whole blame of the insurrections which had torn the kingdom, as well as his own private griefs, wholly upon the Apostle ; and he was in some degree right, though it would have been hard to make him believe that the root of the evil lay in the innate depravity of human nature, which is so watchful to guard against the reception of the truth.

At this moment, so wild were his passions, that he would not only have most cheerfully renounced his Christianity, to regain his sister and his beloved Ethne, but he would have given up Saint Patrick to the hands of the executioner, as the prime instigator of evil. Now, the Apostle's culpability, in robbing him of

the affections of the beautiful Druidess, flashed on him with assured conviction, and he wondered why he had not before seen it in this light. But his distraction and his raving were now of little avail, when he was so chained down by circumstances that his every movement was cramped and fettered ; and it is a prominent attribute of the passions, that the more violent they are, they tend the more to unfit their victim to obtain gratification. The only course left for the prince to pursue, was to fight heroically against the insurgent troops, and if they should be fortunate enough to capture any of the northern chiefs, his sister might possibly be recovered by exchange of captives. This was his only consolation for Aoine ; but the more he thought of the fair Druidess, the more hopeless he became of finding her ; and even if he did find her, he despaired of seeing her unchanged in her affection, after what he had heard of her meetings with Farquhar.

CHAPTER X.

Gairridh 'n fiach moch a maireach
Air do ghruoighse ann san ar-fhaich.

OSSIAN, *Marbh-rann Oscair.*

——What a bridge
Of glass I walk upon! over a river
Of certain ruin! mine own weighty feet
Cracking what should support me.

MASSINGER.

IN the midst of the confusion produced by the loss of the princess, and while Malthuine was hesitating what to do, and the king determining to stand by the kingdom, though his children should all be carried into captivity,—one of the scouts arrived in great haste at the palace, and announced the rapid approach of the king of Leinster, with a nu-

merous army. The intelligence was somewhat unexpected ; for Logaire had intended to march his forces to the frontiers of Leinster, and not to be assailed in his own palace ; but the disaster which had befallen Aoine had thrown all into so much disorder, that Kriomthan's approach had not been heard of till he was almost ready to storm the Rath of Tara. As Logaire, however, did not now look on this active foe with contempt, he lost no time in making the best possible disposition of his force, in order to give him a proper reception.

“ Order every man to arms, and muster on the western slope,” were the immediate commands of the king, and, a moment after, all the Raths on the hill poured out their garrisons, ready accoutred for battle.

It was a glorious sight to see those brave warriors crowding out from the ports of their fortifications, and thickening their ranks, till their numbers became countless ; and the stir of eager heroism, and the shouting of

youths impetuous to meet their foes, and the moving field of heads, that all seemed to be animated with one common spirit, and the glancing of their spears and javelins in the sun, and the clang of their quivered arrows,* gave an aspect of terrible grandeur to the palace and its surrounding defences, that would have appalled even Kriomthan, had he been actuated by any other principle of hostility but the untamed and untameable spirit of independence. It was a beautiful summer's day. The sun shone warm and bright, and the whole sweep of the firmament was serene and cloudless. The winds had sunk to a dead calm, and the forests were motionless and still, stretching away under the eye like a dark and boundless sea, whose waves had been hushed asleep, or frozen up in their path. Nothing seemed to move in earth or heaven

"Εκλαγξαν ὁ ἄρ' οἷοι ἐπ' ἔμψων ζωομένους,
 Αὐτὰ κινηθέντες.

but the living mass of warriors rushing impetuously to the muster ; and the blare of the war-horns, and the confused hum of the gathering host, rung loudly through the stillness of the air.

The whole of Logaire's forces were immediately collected on the green slope of the hill of Tara, covering its side like a cloud which the tempests had gathered on the face of the blue sky. It was determined to march the whole army instantly forward to a strong position in the line of Kriomthan's march, and not to leave a man at Tara, as they could easily fall back to its defence, if they were unsuccessful ; and by bringing the whole army into action at once, the chance was, that they would so disable the Leinstrians, that they would not be farther disturbed with their insurrections.

They reached the position towards evening, just as the van of Kriomthan's army came in sight, among the copsewood, on the opposite

bank of a small river,* which was much swelled with the rains that had fallen in the higher grounds the day before ; and it ran deep and rapid between the embattled foes. A skirmish was immediately begun between the slingers and the bowmen ; but they were yet too distant to do much execution ; besides, the royalists had so much the advantage in consequence of their position, that Kriomthan did not choose to expose his men, and kept them as much as possible under cover of the bushes, till he might deliberate on the best mode of passing the river. The bushes protected them, indeed, from the arrows of Logaire's archers, but the slingers continued to give them great annoyance ; for, a strong body of them, led by the prince in person, had taken their station on the highest point

* I have not been able to ascertain, with accuracy, whether or not this was the Liffey, as Keating asserts; but it is not of much moment.

See his History in loco.

of the bank, and kept up an incessant shower of stones on their enemies, beating down on their heads the very bushes behind which they were drawn up, and raining the leaves as thick around them as if they had been blown upon by the October winds. The instant the slingers saw a head shoot up among the bushes, or an arm come into view through an opening, it was eagerly aimed at, and battered as if the assailants had, in sport, been pelting at frogs in a pond, rather than thirsting for the lives of their opponents.

The king of Leinster, however, was not a person to be tamely sported with when the game was independence. He lost no time in dispatching scouts to discover where the river was most easily fordable ; making the troops fall back beyond the reach of the slingers till their return. He knew there was a ford nearly opposite to Logaire's position, but the swelled state of the river would give the royalists great advantage over him, should he attempt the passage in the face of their strong-

ly posted force. There was also a rude bridge of planks at a small distance above ; but as it was very narrow, and unfurnished with railing, should he attempt to cross it, the troops would be exposed to unnecessary and wanton destruction. He thought it wise, however, to secure this bridge, lest Logaire should take advantage of it to send a detachment against him while crossing the river. The ford he secured in a similar manner, that he might at least make the attempt, if a safer passage could not be discovered.

The scouts returned, without having found what they searched for ; and the troops were so impatient for the combat, that Kriomthan, like a skilful general, did not wish to allow their ardour to cool, by keeping them all night under arms. He determined to make a feint of crossing the plank bridge ; and as soon as he had drawn the royalists to defend it, to wheel suddenly about, and dash through the ford, before they were aware of his intention. With this design, he marched di-

rectly for the bridge ; and the more to deceive his enemy, he made his men bring down timber, as if to enlarge and strengthen it. The feint succeeded ; and as Logaire's position did not command the bridge, he imprudently made a movement to defend it, determining to retrieve the disgrace sustained at Loch Dar, by his activity in seizing every advantage.

A party of royal lancers and bowmen were ordered to the most commanding station on the bank of the river ; while Logaire, in person, led on a strong band, armed with spears, to dispute by inches the passage of the bridge. The Leinstrians all the while were pretending to be busy in strengthening the planks, though, in reality, they were covertly loosening their supports. They were the better able to conceal their operations from the coming on of the twilight ; and this also increased Logaire's eagerness to attack them before the darkness should give them any advantage, by confounding the distinction of friend and foe. The

spearmen accordingly rushed along the bridge, to drive the pretended carpenters from their work; but just as the foremost sprung forward to begin the work of destruction, the bridge fell with a tremendous crash into the torrent of the river, and with it the warriors tumbled helplessly into the strife of the rushing waters, and were swept away with the flood; for the stream under the bridge was confined between approaching rocks, and rushed through the narrowed channel with tumultuous and headlong velocity. Some of the more vigorous struggled for a moment with the fury of the stream, and were seen catching at the angles of the rocks, in all the desperation of death; but they strove in vain, and one dark head sunk after another, disappearing like the rocky points which stud the sea under the sweep of a tempestuous tide.

Farther down, the river, widening its banks, became more shallow, and ran with less furious rapidity; and here was the ford through which the Leinstrians rushed the

moment that the fall of the bridge had thrown the royalists into confusion. Malthuine instantly perceived the error of having quitted their first position, and made all haste to recover his ground. He reached the ford with a strong party, while the main body of the Leinstrians were still in the water, and, falling upon them with fury, he put them for a moment to a stand ; but the pause was only momentary, for the unconquerable spirit of independence burst forth in one loud and appalling shout of " Liberty or Death !" which drowned in its overpowering echo the war-hoop of " Ferragh aboo," raised by the royalists as they began the onset. There is something sublimely terrible in the voice of liberty. It stuns and paralyzes the strongest force that can be mustered under the banners of oppression. Its resources may be few and its parent fountains scanty, but the current of the stream is irrepressible. It rushes on with resistless sweep through every obstruction, and overcomes all, and levels all under its mighty tor-

rent. The spirit which it wakens is something very different from the fierceness of ordinary warfare. It is more noble and lofty in its aims. It stirs more restlessly in the heart, and calls into life more activity and more untameable valour. An independent army feels only one motive to goad them onward, and, however small their force, or however hopeless their circumstances, they rush fearlessly on their foe, dealing around them the lightning of death, and performing deeds of daring heroism, which nothing but the lofty aspirations of liberty could ever have prompted.

The Leinstrians gained the bank, and rushed upon the prince's band who had dared to oppose their passage. The struggle was awful ; for it was now dark, and they could not well discriminate between friends and foes, as the royalists in their eagerness had run into the stream to meet their enemies before they could reach the bank, and both parties were mingled in one tumultuous mass of random hostility. Kriomthan's wise orders saved his

men from the carnage which would have ensued under a less skilful leader. He foresaw that he could not cross the ford without a struggle ; but he gave all his troops a peremptory command to fight their way directly for the position which had been so blindly abandoned by Logaire, and not wait to prolong a skirmish, even if they had evident hopes of being victorious. They did so. They burst through the opposing ranks of the royalists, now thrown into the utmost confusion in the darkness, and before midnight effected a lodgment in the abandoned strength, while Logaire's troops were jostling about in the dark on the river's bank, or plunging into the ford in search of foes who were no longer within their reach. Had the Leinstrians continued a lingering and doubtful skirmish at the ford, they would probably have been defeated, notwithstanding their enthusiasm, for the royalists were rallying fast from their confusion at the plank bridge, and were following the prince's party with all speed. Be-

sides they had advantage both of numbers and position. The king of Leinster, however, made up by skilful generalship for his want of numbers; and in the present case he astonished Logaire as much as when he vanquished him at Loch Dar, when he saw watch fires blazing from the heights he had so heedlessly abandoned, and the Leinstrians refreshing themselves in security after their passage of the ford, and their darkling skirmish on the banks of the river.

The royalists were fain to withdraw between the invaders and the palace, so soon as they found themselves so greatly disappointed and outgeneralled, and when they had promised themselves an easy victory. Logaire, indeed, began to fear that he was fighting against the decrees of heaven, since he was so shamefully discomfited in every encounter with the redoubted Leinstrian prince; for such superstitious notions never failed to arise in those early ages whenever the mind became depressed and gloomy by any reverse

of fortune. A council of war was hastily summoned, in which it was determined to fall back on Tara, and receive the enemy on the slope of the hill. This was the strongest ground which was now in their choice after they had so foolishly lost the position on the river, and moreover, the troops would fight with more determined courage within sight of the palace, and in case of a repulse, they could withdraw in security to the Rath.

“Ogh! and what will become of my Norah?” said old Bryan with a sigh to her Caledonian lover; “if them robbers of Leinster boys shud be giving us a twist after all, it will go cruelly again her, when her little heart’s so sore and sore for the loss of the princess dear.”

The Caledonian was no less anxious than her father concerning the tender-hearted girl; but his courage did not allow him to doubt for a moment that they would defeat the Leinstrians, and he had exulted in the thought of Norah being perhaps a witness to the he-

ron^d deeds he intended to perform in the conflict.) He replied,

“Ou man ! dinna let that fash ye. I’ll wud ye a goup^en o’ groats it she’s as ill-tae ding as the best o’ us whun it comes tae a rael hurry ; she’s no sae hen-hearted as ye trou. Whuna’be though, he’s a de’il o’ a chap this Kion^othan, and I’m jealousin’ he’ll staun us a stieve warsle or we wun on his tap, but we’ll surely gi’e him through the whuns at the lang-run, an’ aiblins gar him cowp the cran heels o’er-head down the hill gin he be sac bal’ as try tae speel’t.”

“ By dad and troth,” returned Bryan, “ ye will get a touch at him in a twinkling ; for if he isn’t over among them trees to the west’art, I never seen a Leinster boy with my eyes. Look towardst them bushes right across Dogharty’s cabin there ; isn’t that the spalpeens lurking inunder the wood for mischief ? By dad is it, for a fi’penny, and there’s the glibbes of the villains looking through the branches, and their spears stuck up through the leaves

like the ribs of an oul' dead horse in a grass field."

"De'il ! an it binna the rievvers whur a's dune," said Angus. "Odd, we maun na'e at them 'ore they ken wee, what fit they're scan-nin' on ; there's naething like smeddum a takin' a camstary cow by the horn."

And away ran the heroic youth to ~~give~~ the requisite information to his superiors. He found the prince busily arranging the troops, and encouraging them by every means in his power to retrieve the two disgraceful defeats they had already sustained from these Leinstrians.

Angus, together with his information of Kriomthan's approach, hinted the practicability of sending a detachment to flank their position in the wood, which would greatly annoy them, and throw them into confusion. His suggestion was instantly put in force, and a strong body of warriors sent through by-paths till they reached the vicinity of the Leinstrian army. The royalists lost no time

in discharging a volley of arrows and javelins among the invaders; but the latter, instead of being thrown into confusion, turned round on the assailants in good order, and rushing forward upon them with levelled spears, drove them back into the wood with considerable loss.

All these minor successes made the Leinsterian advance in high spirits, even in the face of the formidable foe which was drawn up to receive them on the hill of Tara; and the royalists, though they looked heroic from their superior station, felt an involuntary quailing when they saw the intrepid army which had so lately marched on, in defiance of opposition, to the very gates of the palace.

CHAPTER XI.

Are all diseases dead, or will Death say
 He might not kill this prince the common way ?

Old Epitaph apud HEATH.

Eirich Art is glac do chloidheamh,

Seasabh suas an aite t' athair,

Mu thig u beo o na cathabh

Gu mu riogh rath u air Eirinn.

OSSIAN, Marbh-rann Oscair.

THE morning had risen bright and promising, and the sun beamed radiant on field and forest, throwing a fresher verdure on the face of nature, and a gayer lustre on the summer flowers ; whilst

All his windes, Dan Eolus did keepe,

From stirring up their stormie enmitie.*

* Spenser.

Nature, indeed, lay in such quiet and innocent loveliness, that the strife of the hostile armies seemed to be lulled into slumber, when the dawn began to stream over the woods, and “the rosy cheek of morning” * to smile upon Tara. The calm aspect of nature, however, has little power to soothe or lull the tempest of human passions when they are once roused into fury, though it may and does come in all the sweet magic of a heavenly charm, when that fury has worked itself strengthless and feeble. Yet surely a scene like this might have stilled the wildest passions, and breathed peace over the land. Even the lower animals seemed to pause and enjoy the general tranquillity. The sheep stood dimly among the smoke of the early dew. The heifers rested in the rich pastures. Flights of rooks sailed boldly through the sky; and the restless swallows sat twittering

* *Ἡ ῥοσὶς ἡ ἡμέρα*.—HOMER.

on the roofs of the royal palace, or took ~~by~~ a short and momentary flight round the nearest raths. But man seems only to enjoy life when he is embroiled in works of destruction, or at least such scenes of calmness and peace are only relished after he has outridden the storm of his agitating passions ; and Kriomthan paused not nor mused on the beauty of the summer's morning, for he only thought of his foe, who had tried to impose on his subjects, by imperial mandate, the adoption of Christianity, and continued, in defiance of a sworn covenant, to insist on his paying the *Boroimhe* tribute.

The Leinstrian troops, after they had been descried by Bryn, and when they had repulsed the royal detachment that had been sent to flank them, marched directly to the attack of Logaire's forces which were posted on the slopes of Tara. They were received with a galling discharge of lances and arrows the moment they came within shot, and the shouts of the royal army were eloquent in the

expression of courage, to stand by the monarch while a man of them remained to draw a bow or dart a javelin. Their courage was the more intensely kindled into a flame from the behaviour of the ladies of the palace, who had stationed themselves on the loftiest pinnacles and at the highest embrasures of the raths, urging the warriors below with all the irresistible persuasion of pleading beauty to defend them from the foe, and they even mingled their shriller voices with those of the troops, and waved flags of defiance from the battlements.

Norah had also gone up to an embrasure ; but she scarcely knew what she did, her heart was torn with so many distressing feelings. She had lost her royal mistress, and now she might lose both her dear father and her beloved Angus. Her young head turned giddy at the sight of the embattled host, and her pretty eyes grew dim when she looked down on the awful confusion below. She attempted to look towards the place where she had seen those she held dear take their station ;

but the turmoil of the conflict had so mingled and involved the warriors, that, though she had been unagitated and calm, she could not have descried those she looked for. The eyes of Angus, however, were not dimmed with the dangers of a battle, and in the hottest of the strife he found leisure to snatch a momentary look at the battlements, to see whether Norah was in the number of the spectators. At last he did see the lovely girl standing apart from the rest, disconsolate and woe-begone. His first feeling was to dart away to comfort her; but he checked himself in an instant, for his name, he recollected, would be for ever sullied should he desert his standard, and, thinking that he was seen by the lovely maid, he strung up his courage to its highest bent, and leapt into the hottest of the fight, levelling his way with his spear, which he drove before him like a flash of lightning, and doing deeds of valour at which he himself was astonished.

It was at this very point where Kriomthan

was gallantly leading on his troops, himself setting them the brightest example of bravery and unconquerable heroism. The Caledonian soon perceived the warlike king dealing destruction around him wherever he advanced, and to see him and to wish to achieve immortal renown by vanquishing him were the same thing. "Odd, gin I dinna pu' doun his tap, an' tak' his fleegaries o' feathers tae my Norah fur a bit trophy, they's no ca' me Angus," thought the heroic lover as he sprung forward to make good his resolution upon the chieftain. But a single arm, however strong, was not able to penetrate to this champion of independence; for he was so beloved by his soldiers that every stroke aimed at him was eagerly parried by the affectionate Leinstrians around him. Angus brought more than one of these officious defenders to the ground, but their places were instantly supplied by others, so that he became quite furious, and bounded at one desperate leap upon the king, crying,

“ Yield, ye rybel loon, or tak’ the deatly^{ye} sae weel deserve.”

A whole circle of spears were instantly levelled at the daring youth, and he would soon have paid dear for his rashness had not Kriomthan motioned to spare him. He recognised him as the youth who had daringly shot the arrow at him at Loch Dar ; and he was more anxious to take him captive than to kill him. Angus was accordingly seized, and though he struggled hard to regain his liberty, he was too much hemmed in among his enemies to effect his purpose. They were about to carry him to the rear, when Prince Malthuine, with a chosen band of invincibles, made a desperate assault on the phalanx that stood around Kriomthan, and, in despite of the firmness of the Leinstrians, made them give way, and drove them a considerable space down the slope. The confusion which ensued was not overlooked by the captive Caledonian, who was still close to the king of Leinster ; and when those who guarded him

were hard pressed by the royalists, he twisted himself from their grasp, again leapt towards Kriomthan, and, snatching his plume of feathers from his brow, bore it off triumphant, and rejoined his comrades with the proud trophy.

On the other wing of the battle, where Logaire fought in person, the contest was for some time very doubtful. At length, however, the royalists began to have the better of their enemies, animated as they were to daring achievement by the presence and example of the king, and by the powerful motive of defending the assembled beauty of the court, whose anxious eyes were fixed on every turn which the battle assumed.

While the contending foes were thus letting loose their fury, and spreading death and havoc over the green slopes of Tara, under the bright beaming of the sun and in the calm of the summer air, all at once the heavens overcast, and the clouds gathered into dark and lowering masses of a deep brassy

hue, like the midnight waves of the sea illuminated by the red glare of a beacon-fire, or the flames of a burning ship. * Thunder began to break in distant and indistinct peals far to the south, and a few faint gleams of lightning shot through the black rain-clouds on the horizon. These distant preludings of a storm, however, were not observed by the eager combatants, who continued unwearied in their work of slaughter. The heavy clouds by degrees began to journey northward, and centered slowly towards the scene of the battle, hanging over Tara in a black and frowning canopy, ready to burst in shivers on the heads of the contending foes, and pour down upon them all the fury of heaven's vengeance. This dark pile of clouds seemed for a moment to pause over the work of carnage below it, and it looked even more gloomy and

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that the author is not indebted to fancy, but fact, for this storm. — See Keating's History.

myful from the stillness of the air, than if it had blown a hurricane.

The pause was but for a moment. The lightning began to flash dreadfully from the black clouds, the thunder burst over the battle field in loud and continued peals, and the rain fell in such torrents, that it looked like a cataract which had been scattered by the winds. * Both armies were alarmed at this tremendous convulsion of the elements, for each of them dreaded that the vengeance of heaven was pointed in particular against them. Several of the warriors paused from the work of slaughter from the fear of celestial punishment, though their hearts were undaunted for any human foe. Logaire's troops, also, began to recollect the threatenings of Calye Mulloy, when they were at the Coluisge, and

* At Glencar, near Sligo, is a cataract, which, when the wind blows in a particular direction, is wholly carried up into the air, and falls at a distance in rain.

her prediction that they would be destroyed by thunder from heaven, for their apostacy from the religion of their fathers. All of the troops, indeed, had not heard this threatening prediction ; but fear is very contagious, and the consternation soon became general. If Kriomthan's troops had now been free from terror, they would have obtained an easy victory ; but they also had their fears, though they had no alarming prophecy to augment them. The king of Leinster was not so easily intimidated himself ; and when he saw his foes giving way, he boldly rushed forward on the division which Logaire commanded in person. The sovereigns soon recognised each other ; and Logaire, wishing to conceal his terror of the thunder, sprung forward to meet his antagonist, who was no less eager to measure his sword with the king of Tara.

The heroes who stood around their respective sovereigns closed at the same instant with one another, and the combat raged here as fierce as ever ; while the rest of the armies

stood aghast at the roaring of the thunder, and the gleaming of the lightning. They were thus mingled in all the confusion of hostile strife, when a peal of thunder, more terrible than they had yet heard, crashed immediately over their heads, and at the same moment Logaire fell. His faithful band, however, fought with more than mortal bravery around the fallen monarch, and succeeded in carrying off his body. *

The fall of the king was a death-blow to the royal cause ; and the prince could not keep his men in the ranks, so universal became the consternation, when the fatal circumstance was known. To add to their confusion, the night came on ; and though the

* Our historians are not agreed whether Logaire was struck by a thunderbolt for his crime of swearing the pagan oath at Loch Dar, or whether he fell by Kriomthan's sword. I have, in the text, left it doubtful.

See Keating, O'Flagherty, and Dr Campbell.

thunder had rolled away to the north, the rain-clouds continued to hover above them, and greatly increased the darkness. The Leinstrians were unwilling to relinquish the advantage which Logaire's death gave them, and pressed hard upon the royalists, who were now in full retreat up the hill, to take refuge in the raths, and defend the palace. The ladies, who had hitherto aided the shouts of the warriors with encouraging cheers, began to fill the air with screams and lamentation. They wandered wildly from one battlement and embrasure to another, eager to learn what had fallen out, but too frantic to understand what any one answered to their incoherent questions.*

* The Greek scholar will not be displeased to see a similar scene of war from the sublime poet Lycophron, to whom I have been several times indebted for imagery.

Ἄπαντα δὲ χόῳ πραγμάτων ὀησμένη
 κεῖται, περὶ τὰν ὅσπερ ἴηεν γλαί

All at once, a terrible shout arose from the north side of the hill, which was opposite to the principal scene of the battle ; and it came on the wind in repeated bursts, still nearer and nearer to the palace and the combatants. As it was now pitch dark, it was not possible to ascertain from whom this shout arose. Was it a reinforcement come thus timely to the royalists, to save them from a disgraceful rout ? Or, was it a reserved body of Leinstrians, bursting in to secure the half-won triumph ? It seemed to be neither ; for this furious band rushed into the dark confusion of the fight, and attacked, indiscriminately, Leinstrians and royalists ; and as they kept in a close unbroken phalanx, and were unexhausted and fresh,

Λογχαῖς ἀποστίλνοντες. Οἰμωγῇ δέ μοι
 Ἐν ὧσι τυρῶν ἐξ ἀκρῶν ἰνδάλλεται,
 Πρὸς αἰδέρας κυρῶσα νημερῆς ἑὸς ἀεὶ,
 Γῶν γυναικῶν, καὶ καταρῖξαγαῖς πέπλων,
 Ἀλλήλην ἐπ' ἀλλήλῃ συμφορᾶν ἡδεγμειῶν.

Cassandra, 219.

they made a dreadful havoc. It was well for the royalists, that, for the most part, they had got within shelter of the raths ; otherwise, they would infallibly have been exterminated ; for, had this new and desperate band arrived a few minutes sooner, the troops of Tara would have been inclosed between them and the pursuing Leinstrians. As it was, the Leinstrians had to sustain almost the whole force of the new-comers ; but they did not therefore give way : they fought the more heroically, believing this to be some paltry reinforcement, which knew not yet that the king had fallen, and would soon be disheartened when the tidings spread among them.

This fresh band, however, was no other than the rebel army of O'Neil, who had come by rapid marches upon Tara, in consequence of intelligence that all the troops had been drawn out to meet Kriomthan, with the intention of surprising the ungarrisoned raths. In this design the chief had not been successful ; but learning that the army of Tara had

been marshalled on the slopes, he determined to lose no time in beginning the attack, even at night ; for his former defeat at Dalriogh had not cured him of his passion for night battles. The contest was now wholly between the two redoubted foes of Tara ; and they seemed to have met with full resolution to exterminate, or be exterminated. The carnage was truly dreadful ; the more so, that all was dark, tumult, and confusion ; and friends often drenched their weapons in the blood of friends, while aiming to destroy their opponents.

When morning dawned, the slaughter on both sides had been so great, that those who survived were glad to betake themselves, exhausted as they were, to flight, or rather to mutual separation, for the victory could not properly be claimed by either. The royal troops could see, from the security of the raths, the dejected and slow retreat of their assailants, each winding in scattered parties towards their own territory. Prince, Mal-

thuine, on whom the command had devolved, sallied forth instantly, at the head of a chosen body of warriors, who, though they had remained under arms, were fresh and spirited, compared with those who had fought unceasingly the whole night. He had remained ignorant who the fresh assailants were, that had come upon them after night-fall ; but when morning discovered the detested insignia of O'Neil, he forgot the existence of the king of Leinster, and directed his march wholly against the chieftain of Rath-na-Carraig.

The royalists soon overhied the exhausted rebels, and attacked them with such fury that they threw down their arms and begged for quarter. The chief himself had disappeared in the tumult, and no one could tell where he was ; but young Fergus, who had performed the most valorous deeds during the whole affray, and had stood boldly to the last, came forward with all the prudence of a veteran commander, and requested terms of the prince for his brave clansmen, when he saw it would

be fool-hardy to hold longer out. Malthuine was captivated with the appearance and behaviour of the youthful hero ; and, hot as his rage was against the rebel clan, there was a nobleness in Fergus that strongly awakened in him more generous feelings than severity or cruelty towards his discomfited troops.

“ We submit,” said the noble youth, “ to the chance of war, in which fortune has been favourable to you ; and I must, in the absence of my father, beg you to be merciful to those brave fellows who have fought so heroically. For myself I claim nothing ; I am willing to resign my life for the cause we embarked in, if you will only save my brave clansmen.”

The prince’s brow, which was knit with wrath and frowned with gloomy vengeance, began to relax into a milder expression of feeling while he surveyed the manly air of the boyish warrior. He gazed a moment at him in wonder, and perceived on his countenance a noble firmness which he could not think of

subjecting to indignant captivity, much less of punishing with death. He acted more like a prince in giving him his hand, which Fergus frankly received, and they were soon upon as gracious terms as it was possible for enemies to be.

As the shattered army of Kriomthan had withdrawn into the woods to recruit their spirits by rest after the fatigues of the night-battle, Malthuine's forces were now at liberty to do the same, and were accordingly ordered to the raths. Fergus accompanied the prince to the palace, where he was hospitably entertained, so far as it could be done without liquor; for access to the cellars could not be had without O'Grushelan, and he had disappeared at the commencement of Kriomthan's attack. The door of the cellar was at last forced open with much difficulty, when it was found to be strongly barricadoed on the inside by every species of ponderous moveable which the vault contained, indicating that it was the fortified retreat of some person or persons

whose courage did not appear to be a distinguishing attribute thereof. Those who burst through the barrier were saluted with the most piteous minglement of voices which the fear of immediate death ever gave birth to. It had some distant resemblance to the yelp of a superannuated dog, seconded in the concert of harmony with the expiring groans of a broken-winded horse, and partook by turns of the screech of a barn owl scared from her nest, and the stifled growling of a hippopotamus sweltering among the reeds of the Nile to escape from his hunters. No words could be distinguished, though the sounds were at times something like human, and were nearly as articulate as those of a magpie when it first tries to speak.

“ By dad,” remarked Bryan, “ if the ould one isn’t got into the cellar, I never seen nor heard him with my eyes since the day I was born alive. Well, and to be sure, he has been after knowing of a right pull he cud have at the crature there, or he wudn’t

have com'd, I'll be boun' for a farthing he wudn't."

Some of the less superstitious not intimidated by this wise conjecture, advanced boldly, and found, not an *avatar* of the devil, but O'Grushelan and Dranshogle, concealed behind a range of jars in the farthest part of the vault, and nearly insensible with the liquor they had drank to keep them alive, in the terrible fever of fear which had conjunctly and severally attacked them.*

"Gude ha'e a care o' us," said Angus, "gin they binna baith as drunk's the laird o' Biggar in a yule mornin', an' that's e'en a braid word whun I ha'e said it. De'il! an it wadna be a gude turn tae drouk their lugs in a sowp o't, gif it war'na for misgruglin' the drap gude drink it the puir lads wad be blythe

* This brings to my mind the following descriptive contrast:—"Non ferro sed vino, non lanceis sed ca-seis, non ensibus sed utribus, non hastibus sed verubus, onerantur."—*PIERRE de Blois*.

o' it ha'e been a' night stavin' at ane anither, and struislin' i'the dark."

"Hogh!—mm!" grumbled Dranshogle. "Houl' off, ye Tory rebels!" shouted O'Grushelan in more articulate phrase, being more used to talk in his cups than his companion.

"Aye, ye may weel stegh and grain nou," said the Caledonian, " efter the bruilzie's a' by : an' what think ye o' yoursels, ye couartly hashes? lyin' up there sookin' the greybairds, an' nursin' thae muckle bilfs o' kytes o' yours, it's gude for nae gear I can see, an' binna tae breed a waistry amang the woo' it ye cuir them wi' ; or aiblins they might do tae stap in i'the hole o' a rath it the enemy may be like tae win through at."

"O Lord, no yet!" cried Dranshogle, in the first articulate sounds he had uttered since his discovery, roused, no doubt, to supererogatory exertion by the fear of having his belly crammed into a breach for the Leinstrians to shoot at. His exertions did not stop with words, and he began to get on his legs to put

himself in a posture of defence ; but seizing, for the purpose of aiding his resurrection, on one of the aforesaid greybeard jars, he contrived to overbalance it and himself at the same time, and lay flat on the floor like a bilged lugger in the basin of a canal, or a murdered whale on the deck of a Greenland sloop.

There was no time, however, to wait for these porpoises getting to rights, and they were left to accomplish their own resuscitation as they best could, while the jars were laid under contribution for the behoof of young Fergus and his officers, now in the palace.

This young chief and the prince soon grew so gracious, that the former hinted his wish, if his father was found to be killed, to leave Ireland altogether, and settle himself on the opposite shore of Kintyre. Malthuine was not willing to part with so promising a youth ; but he seemed determined, probably from a principle of ambition to which he was much

alive,' and which he foresaw it would not be possible to gratify in a country which contained two such enterprising spirits as Malthuine and Kriomthan.

Search was made among the slain for the body of O'Neil, but if he had really fallen in battle he could no where be found. Those who knew him well were aware that he was not very fond of rashly exposing his person, and supposed that he had secretly made off in the confusion, and when he saw the rout of the troops had fled to some place of security. As matters thus stood, the only course left for Fergus was to make a truce, which gave him leave to return home with the remains of his army. Kriomthan also judged it wise to march back his shattered troops to Leinster.

CHAPTER XII.

Doctor sanctissimus ille, qui melleo prædicationis
imbre totam rigavit et inebriavit ecclesiam.

JOHN of Salisbury.

—A spirit pure as her's
Is always pure, ev'n when it errs ;
As sunshine broken in a rill,
Though turn'd astray is sunshine still.

LALLA ROOKH.

WHILE the preparations for war had been going forward, Saint Patrick was actively employed in his missionary labours, and particularly in planning and superintending the erection of churches. He had, for this purpose, made an extensive tour through all parts of the island where his presence was likely to be

useful, and at the period of the conflict at Tara he had not returned thither. He was, indeed, at this time, in the beautiful valley of Dalriogh, whither he had sent one of his zealous associates to instruct in Christianity a few huntsmen who had there built a pretty hamlet, soon after the skirmish with O'Neil.

One day, after performing the morning service to his little flock, the Apostle, as his manner was, went out to meditate on his further proceedings, and while he walked in solitary musing along the banks of the brook, he lifted up his soul to heaven, that he might be aided by divine power to complete the great work now so anxiously begun amidst discouragement and danger. He wandered onward to the group of oaks at the head of the valley, where the rebels had prepared their fire-brands before they rushed on the king's encampment, and it brought strongly to his memory the incident which had thrown him into the hands of his enemies, and the kindness of Providence in rescuing him again in a way little short of

miraculous ; for though he did not presume, like the impious Methodists of our own corrupt age, to believe that God singled him out as a particular favourite, neither did he think, as the modern Deistical party, (called by themselves Unitarians,) that there is no such thing as particular providence, since all events happen through the operation of general laws,—the Apostle being a better logician than to be ignorant of the simple fact, that what is general must be made up of particulars.

He had no wish, however, to again expose himself to capture, should there be any lurking foe now at Clogharnbrec, and, instead of clambering up the rugged channel of the brook, under the shattered and overhanging rocks, he took the way of the hills on the left.

About noon he found himself on the brink of the lofty precipice which overlooked the former wild retreat of O'Neil, and as he looked with no common interest on the pile below him, now half sunk and ruined from the burning of the posts which had supported

it, he perceived a stream of smoke rising through the stones, indicating that it was not altogether deserted. . But what was his surprise, when he perceived two ladies come out from it in hunting apparel, the foremost of whom brought to his mind the appearing of Venus to her son in the first *Æneid*.

*Namque humeris de moreabilem suspenderat arcum
Venatrix, dederatque comam diffundere ventis;
Nuda genu, nodoque sinus collecta fluentis.*

For efter the gys and maner thare
Ane active bow apoun hir schulder bare,
As sche had bene ane wilde huntreis
With wind waffling hir haris lowsit of trace,
Hir skirt kiltit till hir bare knee.

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

He stood gazing with wonder on these two nymphs of the glen, not that it was unusual for the Irish ladies to engage in the chace, but because they had chosen so secluded and wild a dwelling. The height of the cliff where he

stood, and her changed attire, prevented him at first from recognising the beautiful Druidess, though her elegant form and graceful movements soon told him that it could be none other. He was overjoyed at the discovery, but he was lost in conjecture as to what had brought her to Clogharnbrec, for though he had heard of Farquhar's savage martyrdom, he had heard nothing of Ethne's flight.

He hastened along the summits of the cliffs to meet her as she came out from the glen, at a place higher up the stream, where the rocks gave place to green sloping banks. The surprise of the fair nymph and her companion was no less than that of Saint Patrick had been, when they saw his venerable and majestic figure, as he walked slowly before the gorge of the glen awaiting their approach.

“Gracious Providence !” exclaimed Ethne, “my prayers are now answered ;” and running forward, she fell at the feet of the holy man. The Apostle's heart beat so violently with mingled and indescribable emotions at this

unexpected scene, that he could scarcely speak to bid her rise ; for he felt, as every man would, on seeing a lady of such commanding beauty at his feet, and he also felt, as a Gospel Missionary, the importance of having the daughter of the Arch-Druid revering him as such. He knew at once that Farquhar's hazardous attempt had so far succeeded, and ejaculated thanks to God for so prospering their labours.

Ethne and her young companion had for some time previous tenanted the lonely and ruinous pile, subsisting on "the quarry of their bows," and the roots of the carmyle, with other productions of the woods. She had not failed to think more and more of what she

The roots of the heath pea or carmyle [*Orobus tuberosus*, LINN.] are still used in times of scarcity in several northern countries. Hunters often carry a quantity of these roots to chew in their expeditions. Good bread can be made from them. See Ray, *Hist. Plant.* 976.

had learned from Farquhar of Christianity, and every day the impression wore deeper into her mind. She still had many doubts, however, though these arose more from feeling, and from her youthful associations which were linked with Druidism, than from objections suggested by reason. Her perplexity rather increased than diminished with time, and she earnestly wished to meet with the Apostle to take his advice as to what she should do. She now had her wish, and had she known of his being at Dalriogh, she would, without scruple, have gone thither sooner, though she had carefully avoided all intercourse with the villagers, none of whom knew of her retreat.

Saint Patrick was made acquainted with the particulars of her flight, and with her wavering hesitation respecting the adoption of Christianity. She appeared to be much moved by the eloquence with which he preached to her the doctrines of the cross, and exposed the errors and impiety of the Druids, and he parti-

cularly insisted on the horrid practice of sacrificing human victims, as contrary to the beneficent and merciful attributes of the Deity, and also that all sacrifices had now been done away by the grand sacrifice of the Son of God. He urged her with all his earnest eloquence to be converted, and seeing her emotion at his words, he even pressed her to consent to be baptized.

His triumph was complete : she consented, not with words, for her heart was too full for utterance ; but she went with holy reverence to the edge of the brook, and knelt before

“ ---The God to whom the Christians pray,”*

while Saint Patrick prepared to administer the sacred ceremony of initiation into the Catholic Church. Her fair companion also followed the example of her superior, and thus were two deserving and beautiful women snatched

* Gertrude of Wyoming.

from the delusions of the Druidic superstition, by the well urged persuasion of the zealous apostle of the cross.

The ceremony of baptism was no sooner concluded than the thoughts of her father came full and bitter on the mind of the Druidess. She had now promised to leave all, and follow the precepts of the gospel; but her feelings revolted from the command, and made her shudder to think of the effect it would produce on her aged parent. She wished much, indeed, to attempt to open his eyes to the errors she had herself so happily escaped, though she feared, from the reception her former timid objections met with from him, that her confirmed apostacy would call down all his wrath upon her, instead of listening coolly to her reasonings. Such thoughts greatly agitated her mind, but the Apostle did all he could to soothe and calm her emotions.

Saint Patrick's own feelings were not so very quiet and collected. A point of such

moment gained, was one of those things which lighted up all the fire of his ardent spirit, and carried his thoughts with rapidity over both the past and the future progress of his great work. His eyes flashed as he spoke, and his words breathed such ardour and energy, that none could have heard him unmoved, much less the youthful girls, whose hearts, naturally warm, responded with subdued willingness to his glowing eloquence.

He persuaded them to accompany him to the village of Dalriogh, that they might join their voices in the assembly of the converts, and that they might behold the unity and peace and brotherly love which prevailed in this little sequestered community. On the way thither he dissuaded Ethne from returning to her father, for he feared lest the abhorred spirit of persecution which had begun to rage would not stop to sacrifice his interesting young converts, to terrify others from following their example, and thus frustrate his well planned design of holding forth the in-

stance of the fair Druidess to draw others into the faith.

Ethne was hailed by the converts at Dalriogh with enthusiastic joy, and she never felt so much delight in the praise of the thousands who worshipped at her father's grove, as in this genuine effusion of glad welcome from the Christian villagers. Benevolence and brotherly love, indeed, are among the striking characteristics of our divine religion, and the conversion of a single soul from error is always hailed with holy joy, which naturally expands itself in kindness towards the person converted. It shows not itself in dull and joyless moroseness, but makes its way to the heart, and kindles in it an ardent kindness for the whole human race, and a lively devotion to the Great Author of all. How melancholy and distressing it is to think that this only soother of human misery and care should have been so sadly corrupted by the impious interpolations of its own ministers, and that the cup of blessing which the cross

holds out to man should ever have been mingled with so damnable a drug as the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal reprobation. Yet this is one of the leading articles of faith among those who blush not to assume the exclusive title of Evangelical teachers in our own times. It pains me to think that such a doctrine should ever have been drawn from the Bible, when it so expressly declares that the Saviour died for *all*, which could not be the case if a fixed number had, from all eternity, been foredoomed to hell.

The young Druidess was rejoiced to see so many cheerful faces in the village group which crowded out to welcome her, and, led by Saint Patrick, they assembled together, and united in a song of thanksgiving to Him who had opened the minds of the young converts to see the delusions of the ancient superstition. This scene was so novel and striking, that it made a very powerful impression on the feelings of Ethne, agitated as she was by the step she had taken, and the tenderness she still

felt for her father. Nor did she forget, in the tumult of so many emotions, to think of her royal lover, whose image had become so indelibly stamped on her young heart ; but she was totally at a loss how to act with regard to the hateful promise she had been forced to give to O'Neil. She could not, she thought, conscientiously break her word, which she had solemnly plighted, and yet she could not well adhere to it, without belying the faith she had professed at her baptism, as it was then a precept with the Christians, never to intermarry with the heathen. Even in the hurry of her thoughts and feelings, she found time to glance her mind to this perplexing point, and resolved to acquaint Saint Patrick with her difficulties, and take his advice how she ought to act.

As she turned to consult him, the sound of a harp came from the trees at the entrance of the village ; and immediately after, old Camderoch made his appearance, playing one of his mournfullest airs. The harper had

been so affected at the loss of the young princess, that he had vowed, old as he was, and notwithstanding his dread of magic, to make a peregrination over the whole island in search of her, and it was on this errand that he had now arrived at Dalriogh. Without taking any notice of the illustrious Apostle, or his beautiful convert, Camderoch addressed the assembly with

“ ‘The blessing of God in heaven and an oul’ harper be with ye all, good people. Ogh, if them times isn’t as bad, sure and troth, as they cud be, when such villains are foun’ in oul’ Erin, to be after running off with the beautifulest princess in the whole world. Dear a dear, if my oul’ eyes cud but see her once’t again, or if ye cud have seen her anyhow.’ ”

“ What princess do you mean, I beseech you ? ” cried Ethne, who had an instinctive fear of what had really happened.

“ Ogh, madam,” said the harper, “ that I shud have to say it, when it was the prin-

cess Aoine herself, that was so good and kind to me and to Bryan's little Norah ; and sure she is herself the sweetest jewel of a princess that ever was know'd in oul' Erin."

" Who dared," said Saint Patrick with anxiety, " to carry off Aoine ?"

" Why and troth," said Camderoch, " it cudn't be nobody for sartain but some of them rebels of Draid boys in the north, for the purpose of magic, when they can't let an oul' harper pass without putting enchantments upon him. Man alive ! didn't they make myself wander out of the forest tracks twenty times, for pure mischief, they did, and they are breaking my twangers every minit, the Tories."

Ethne, during this speech, looked much distressed, for she began to recollect certain circumstances which had occurred before she left the grove, which she now thought were connected with this felonious capture of the fair princess ; and she was too well acquainted with the Druid rites to doubt for a mo-

ment what would be her fate, to whose hospitality and kindness she had formerly been so much indebted, and she instantly resolved to save her, or die in the attempt.

“ Find me a steed, fast,” she cried ; “ O haste ! the fleetest the village can supply, and I may yet be in time to save her !”

The villagers dispersed like a cloud scattered by the winds, every one more eager than his fellow to be first to serve the fair convert ; for all approved of her heroic enterprise, though they grieved to think of losing the company of so sweet a lady, who had appeared in their little rural circle like an angelic vision, only for an instant. “ And sure, madam, ye wont be going alone, when I wud be so entirely glad to go to the end of the worl’ to sarve you ?” was echoed from twenty voices at once, with true Irish feeling. But she would not accept of service, which, she said, would only expose her the more to be slaughtered at the altar. She would not even permit her own female attendant, but set out

alone, amidst the warm blessings of the feeling villagers, and particularly Camderoch, who said, “ Upon his troth and conscience, he never know’d such an angel, only the princess herself, and she wasn’t to be foun’ now, Ochon ! ”

CHAPTER XIII.

Für iti iolav,
Buddyg Veli !
A Manhogan rhi
Rhygeidwei deithi,
Ynys Vel Veli !

MS. Welsh Fragment of TALIESIN.

At Beltane quhen ilk bodie bownis
To Peblis to the Play,
To heir the singand an the soundis,
The solace suth to say,
Be firth an forest furth thay found
Thay graythit them full gay.

Peblis to the Play, St. I.

BRYAN's conjecture as to the escape of the villains was right. They had been afraid to proceed by land even through the most unfrequented routes, and had made a circuit through the forest till they reached the shore, where they hurriedly embarked, and cruized safely

round the coast till they reached a friendly territory. The hapless princess was at length securely lodged in the subterranean vault in which Saint Patrick had formerly been confined. The gentle and timid girl was distracted with the terror of her approaching fate, of which she had no doubt ; for the inhuman wretches had told her, in the coarsest and most unfeeling manner, what she had to expect. They had, indeed, barbarously gagged her to prevent her crying, but she wrestled with her fetters in all the energy of frenzy, till she exhausted her strength, and sunk insensible on the damp couch of the vault, though this was only a cessation of pain, for as soon as her vigour was revived by rest, she renewed the mad and unavailing struggle. A light slumber sometimes came to her relief, and steeped her sorrows in forgetfulness, or brought sweet visions to her fancy.

Y al que de pensamiento fatigado
El sueño baña con licor pia doso
Curando el corazon despedazado.

GARCILAZO DE LA VEGA.

And o'er her toss'd and troubled mind,
Soft dreams, in sweet and lapsing stream,
For grim despair, threw rapture's beam.

The period was now fast drawing near which was to glut the unhallowed priests with her blood, and put an end to her sufferings in the world of care, for the grand festival of Beltein was soon to be celebrated. There seems to be some misunderstanding among antiquaries as to the precise period when this festival was held, as some of them fix it at midsummer and others on the first of May. It appears that a festival of a similar kind was held at each of those periods like what was formerly remarked of Yule and the festival of the Mistletoe ; yet it is rather a singular fact respecting the remains of these summer festivals, which are still observed in our own times, that the Scottish peasants adhere to the first of May, while the Irish uniformly hold their Beltein on Saint John's day at midsummer. What gave rise to this peculiarity I have been unable to discover, but I think it justifies me

in fixing at midsummer the celebration of the Beltein, which was to decide the fate of Aoine, there being no document extant which is explicit as to the particular day.

It was the wish of Brassail that it should be celebrated on this occasion with unusual pomp, for the purpose of attaching as strongly as possible their remaining followers to the waning cause of Druidism, and perhaps the report of its splendour might even bring back some of those who had apostatized to Christianity.* His affliction for the loss of Ethne, too, made him anxious to propitiate his Gods that she might be restored to him and saved from apostacy, which he dreaded more than death itself. He was not so sanguine in the interpretation of Merlin's prophecy as O'Neil,

* We need wonder the less at the Druids having recourse to such aids, when the Christians *avowedly* practised the same device to draw crowds to gaze that some might remain to pray.—See S. PAULINI, *Opera* ix. and GREGORY, *Epist.* ix.

but he hoped that the grand sacrifice would effect wonders, and O'Neil had promised to be ready to receive her should the horrid rite make her return, being confident of having by that time completely defeated his enemies, and slain both the king and the prince, and established himself on the throne of Tara.

The Beltein festival began at midnight with loud shouts and rejoicing from all the faithful adherents of Druidism, who hastened to assemble on the heights and kindle cairn-fires, the same as at the Samh'in, making a night of brightness,—“ *Nacht der erscheinungen*,” * but they were lighted for a different purpose. At the Samh'in, the fires were destined to supply the extinguished hearths with what was consecrated ; at Beltein, they were intended for the purification of the cattle, and all the live stock of the vicinity might now be seen driving towards the heights to undergo

* *Klopstock*, *Messias*, Ges. iv.

the singular ceremony. This consisted in making them circle the fire nine times by *deas soil*, or according to the course of the sun, and then driving them tumultuously through the midst of the flame. Whether they thought with Hilarion the monk, that the devil entered into the cattle out of hatred to their owners is not clear, but it is thought that they believed this purification would preserve them from accidents till the return of the feast the following year. It is more likely the whole was intended to give influence to the priests—*plurimus fidei occasio fuisset.* *

This ceremony, however, was not all ; for

* Hieron. iv. 2. p. 82.—A similar purification of cattle by water was practised by the Catholics. “ In festa S. Antonii,” says Mabillon, “ prope S. Mariam Majorem ritus nobis insolitus visus est, ut quicquid equorum est in urbe ducuntur cum suis phaleris ad portum ecclesiæ, ubi *aqua lustrali* ab uno e Patribus omnes et singuli asperguntur, dato annuo censu.”—*It. Ital.* 136.

as a farther protection to their flocks and herds, they made an elegant and innocent pastoral sacrifice near the cairn on a turf altar surrounded by a trench. This consisted of a libation of milk thrown into the trench, and the offering of a consecrated cake kneaded with eggs, and water taken from Onvana's well exactly at midnight. The cake was divided into portions, which the officiating Druid offered severally to the most rapacious animals of prey and the diseases which were most dreaded.* The crowd, in the mean while, stood in silent reverence around the bright blaze of the fire, which shone red and glaring on the rough faces of the peasants and the white robes of the Druids. The night indeed was, as Shakespeare says, like "the day-

* Traces of these rites are still found both in Scotland and Ireland, as may be seen in Sinclair's Statistical Account, and various works on antiquities, a summary of which is given in Dr Jamieson's Dict. v. *Bel-tane*.

light sick," only a "little paler." The cattle were not so easily reconciled to the ceremony, and filled the air with their lowing, while they pushed and jostled one another in their attempts to escape from the neighbourhood of the fires, where they had been so roughly treated.

When this part of the ceremony was concluded, the cattle were all driven to the foot of the hill to graze at leisure while the remaining rites were performed. One of these consisted of an incantation for the recovery of the sick, which was merely a *deas soil* procession round the cairn-fire, and the turf altar on which some votive offering was laid. The patient's forehead was afterwards anointed with midsummer dew, which was carefully gathered at day-break, and the cure of course infallibly followed.*

* Midsummer dew in Ireland and May dew in Scotland is thought even at this day among the vulgar to be efficacious in diseases of the eyes, probably because dew

The public ceremonies on the cairn hill were completed by hailing the first appearance of the sun as he rose from the edge of "the upland lawn;" and the moment he was seen the whole assembly gave a loud shout, and fell with their faces to the earth in humble adoration of the visible divinity of the great God Bel, in whose honour the festival was celebrated. They then arose and extinguished the fires, and walked down from the hill with the music playing lively airs, and the hearts of all light and gladsome. The day was afterwards spent in festivity and rejoicing among the common people, but the priests had still before them the ceremony of the horrid sacrifice which was performed in the darkest gloom of the grove. It is thought

is very transparent, on a similar analogy to that which has led to the prescription of barberry bark in jaundice, because it is yellow, and the roots of the little celandine [*Ranunculus Ficaria*] in piles, because they are like that complaint.

that a human victim was always sacrificed at Beltein ; and, from a custom still practised in some parts of Scotland, it may be conjectured that the victim was in most cases determined by lot.* In the present case they had unluckily no need of this, and the helpless princess was accordingly brought forth from the vault to the bloody altar in a state of distraction which it would be in vain to think of describing. The conflict of her thoughts, however, had greatly exhausted her strength, and she looked pale and drooping, and unable to support herself as she stood awaiting her fate.

How great must be the depravity of human nature, when men can thus deliberately commit murder under the guise of sanctity and religion ; and such horrid sacrifices have, alas, been but too frequent in every age of the world, and few nations have passed through

* See Jamieson's Dict. *ut supra*.

the several stages of barbarousness and refinement unstained with the guilt of sacrificing to the Gods their fellow men. To any person, indeed, who has the least knowledge of history, it must appear the height of ignorance and imprudence to deny that such sacrifices were perpetrated by the Druids; yet Dr Smith of Campbelton undertakes, in the true spirit of Celtic clanship, to exculpate them from the charge, because, forsooth, the Druids had such lofty ideas of their Gods, that they thought no image could pourtray them, and no temple was fit to serve them in; and, consequently, it was incongruous to offer to them human sacrifices. Nay, the Druid sacrifices, he alleges, were not even animal, otherwise there would still be traces discoverable in the Celtic language or traditions, which there are not; and in the face of the express testimony of Cæsar, and Tacitus, and Lucan, he triumphantly concludes that the Druids never offered such sacrifices, though they occasionally put criminals to death. By the

same mode of reasoning, I have no doubt Dr Smith could have proved that Captain Cook and other voyagers of our own age, equally worthy of credit, were mistaken in supposing that they had seen human victims sacrificed in the South Sea Islands, and that the murdering car of Juggernaut never crushed the body of a single Hindoo. One would almost indeed be tempted to believe Pinkerton's account of Celtic intellect, when he sees such ignorant effrontery unblushingly published. *

It would have been fortunate for the hapless princess had this doctrine not been an erroneous and dreaming surmise of the eighteenth.

* See Smith's *Gaelic Antiq.* p. 35, 36, 4to. Edin. 1780. A still more striking instance of Celtic hallucination occurs in Shaw's *Hist. of Moray*, attempting to prove that the colder a country is the warmer we must feel; "for," says he, "the cold, by contracting the pores of the body, the vital heat is kept from dissipating, and is repelled towards the inner parts, keeping a necessary warmth in the whole body."—Page 148, 4to edit.

century ; but the horrid reality now stared her in the face as she was led into the dark gloomy recess of the grove * where the infernal mysteries of Druidism were celebrated, and she shivered with horror at the awful scene around her.

The altar was composed of huge shapeless stones, stained with the blood of former victims, and a fire burnt dimly on its summit, and threw a red lurid light on the black trees which surrounded and overhung the spot. From the branches of the trees all around, the putrid limbs of victims were seen hanging and rotting, and the air was polluted with their noisome effluvia. Petrified with dread at this shocking spectacle, the shivering and timid girl attempted to shriek, but her voice died away on her lips, and she swooned and fell into the arms of her savage attendants. Noisy music was incessantly

* Var hon borin a balit ok slegit i elldi.

EDDA SAEMUND.

played to drown her cries, if she had been able to cry, while the preparations for the sacrifice were going forward. At length she was stretched, faint and insensible as she was, on the black stones of the altar beside the fire, and old Brassail himself stood by her ready to plunge his knife in her young breast, and throw her heart into the unhallowed fire. All was at this moment hushed and still; for even the stern and unfeeling priests looked with pity on the trembling victim, and the musicians, contrary to custom, made a full pause.

“To thee, O almighty Bel,” said Brassail with solemnity, “I offer up the body of this young and beautiful virgin princess, to atone for my beloved daughter, whom, in thy mercy and goodness, I intreat thee to restore.”

He finished his prayer, and was brandishing the bloody knife with infernal joy over the bared bosom of the now insensible Aoine, when a wild cry of “Stop—O stop, for

heaven's sake," broke on his ear from the thick grove behind him, and Ethne, frantic and breathless, rushed into the midst of the crowded priests, and, darting upon her father with frenzied wildness, tore the knife from his hand, and threw it on the ground. The old man was so overcome with astonishment, that he was unable to speak, and not knowing whether to blame or praise his lovely daughter, he stood as if his hand had been arrested by the arm of Bel himself. His paternal feeling, however, soon burst through all his thoughts of wrath, and he ran forward, and clasped her to his bosom.

"O my lost, my beloved child, have I again found thee!" were the only words he could articulate.

Ethne was no less affected than her father; but her mind had been wrought up to such frenzy, by her anxiety to reach the grove in time to save the princess, that she could not turn her thoughts from the lovely victim, even in the embrace of her father.

“ Unbind her,—save her,—and I will die in her stead !” was the urgent request of the fair Druidess, as soon as she could compose herself to speak ; and, disengaging herself from her father’s embrace, she ran to the princess, and began to loose her from the altar. The attending Druids attempted to stop her, but Brassail immediately pronounced it to be the interposition of heaven, which had restored Ethne, and saved the princess, and ordered the unholy ceremonies to be forthwith stopped.

Every attention was now bestowed upon the terrified and fainting princess, and they were all moving towards the more open part of the grove, when they heard from a distance the sound of tumult and confusion ; and still it came nearer and nearer, till at length they saw through the trees a number of the peasants of the neighbourhood carrying their long poles of mountain-ash, festooned with flowers,* retreating before a band of

* This was a part of the Beltein ceremonies which

warriors, who were instantly recognized to be the troops of Tara, led by Malthuine. The prince had not lost a moment, after the discomfiture of the rebels, to march, to save, if possible, his beloved sister from the horrid altar.

Brassail was so overpowered by this unexpected apparition, and his mind had been so agitated with the return of Ethne, that his heart sunk within him,—he dropt on the ground—turned a vacant look on his angel daughter, who knelt at his side, and expired without a groan.

The confusion which these events created in the different parties concerned, is more easily conceived than described; and I leave it to the reader to imagine the meeting of the prince with his captive sister and his beloved Ethne, under such painful and pleasing circumstances.

is not yet forgotten, though the modern maypoles are somewhat different from the ancient.—See M'Pherson's Introd. page 223. &c.

Out of respect for the sorrow of Ethne, the prince commanded his followers to evacuate the grove till the usual funeral ceremonies should be solemnized over the body of her father; and he ordered these ceremonies to be prepared with all possible splendour at his proper cost. He knew, indeed, it was contrary to his profession of Christianity to give countenance to these heathen rites; but he did it from love, which was a much stronger principle with him than religion, and Ethne herself took it as it was intended for a high mark of respect, notwithstanding her apostacy from Druidism. Malthuine was eager to return to perform the last honours to the deceased monarch, which his anxiety to rescue his sister had prevented him from thinking of, but he could not leave his Ethne again without ascertaining whether the late events had tended to further his hopes. The subject, indeed, was rather unseasonable, but his impatience could not brook suspense.

Ethne was placed in a distressing situation ; for she persisted in her resolution to abide by her promise to O'Neil, and it was still uncertain whether he were alive or dead. She thought she owed it both to her own high principles of honour, and the memory of her father, to remain inflexible in this point. At the same time, she assured the prince, that he might rely on her pledge to him, should the rebel chieftain be discovered to have fallen in the skirmish. The prince's fancy supplied him with the strongest probabilities that he had fallen, though his body had not been found ; but nothing would satisfy Ethne except positive proof. At last it was proposed to consult the omniscient Vaid of Dunluce relative to his fate ; for the circumstances of Aoine's capture, foretold by her, had made the prince look upon her as an infallible guide in all difficulties.

Calye Mulloy, and a posse of her wrinkled sisterhood, had been present during the night

ceremonies of the Beltein, but it was not permitted to females to be present at the savage sacrifice, and she had retired in the morning to her own domain. It was not likely that she could be induced to return to the grove after knowing the arrival of the Christian troops; for she no sooner learned this than she began earnestly to repeat all the incantations for their destruction which she had formerly found ineffectual.

The prince was so anxious to have his doubts resolved, that he would not trust any person with the task of consulting the Vaid, and set out himself for Dunluce with a strong escort, lest he might be way-laid by his enemies. When he arrived at the rocky isle, he perceived that there was some extraordinary movement going forward among the sisterhood, as they were running too and fro in manifest agitation. On the nether bank, a wild looking figure was seen standing among the rocks, and making the most uncouth sounds and gestures. The creature looked

even more wild than Calye Mulloy herself, and as they came nearer, they heard her crying,

* Aye ye may hide the vile scurrivaig, it ye may, an' hiddle an' smiddle the deeds o' darkness! The de'il rive the thrapples o' the hale bulyon o' ye for a pack o' uncanny limmers! O an I had but ae minit o' the bluidy heartet villain! I wad howk the vera een out o' the head o' him, an' ne'er fash my thumb, nor luck o'er my shouther the mair o't!"

"Odd gin that binna puir Jenny Grougar, my name's no Angus," said the young Caledonian, who was of the prince's escort. "But what was yon she said? De'il, but I'll wud my lug, an' I wadna like weel tae tine't, it the aul' wuzzent runts ha'e got a haud o' that vile rip O'Neil, it has gi'en us sae muckle humuin' and hooi' through the hale kintra."

"O'Neil in Dunluce?" cried the prince with exultation, "My sister's hand to the man who brings me his head!"

In an instant, every warrior of the band dashed forward over the rough rocks, and rushed into the huts. The prince himself made directly for the Vaid's sanctuary; but the object of their search was nowhere to be found. Jenny Grougar also ranked herself among the searchers, and, without speaking, she laid hold of Angus by the arm, and drew him by main force down to a cleft in the rocks, close to the high water mark, which appeared to be filled with sea weeds. These she lifted in handfuls, with many significant gestures, till she had uncovered the person of the rebel chief, who, on the approach of the prince's party, had been there hurriedly concealed, and lay in mortal fear of capture. He had taken refuge at Dunluce on his defeat, thinking it the least likely place he would be sought for; and also for the purpose of consulting Calye Mulloy with regard to his destiny,—reverse of fortune having a wonderful effect in awakening superstitions of this kind.

When he saw Angus standing over him

with his spear, his courage forsook him, and he humbly craved him to spare his life. The Caledonian never felt more good will to dispatch a foe, but he could not do so in cold blood, and he led him toward the prince to receive his doom. Jenny Grougar followed with frantic gesticulation, exulting to see him whom she conceived to be the murderer of her husband in the hands of his enemies, for she was not so insane as to be unable to know friends from foes.

CHAPTER XIV.

Den blutzen Lorbeer, geb ich hin, mit Freuden
Fürs erste veilchen, das der mers uns bringt,
Das duftige Pfänd der neuverjüngten Erde.

Schiller, Piccolomini, A. I.

Some time there is an ende of every deede.

Chaucer.

MALTHUINE had every motive to treat O'Neil as a criminal guilty of the blackest treason. He had stirred up an unprincipled rebellion to gratify his own ambition, and had been the cause of much bloodshed and devastation ; but what weighed most with the prince was his standing between him and supreme happiness, in having the promise of the fair Ethne in marriage. When he saw the crest-fallen chief, however, dejected and sullen, he

could not bring himself to order his execution, though perhaps he justly deserved to suffer.

Calye Mulloy had not been among O'Neil's friends, even in his most prosperous days ; but his confidence in her at this time had wonderfully gained upon her heart ; so much so indeed, that she condescended to intreat the prince to spare him ; and urged her own kindness to himself when at Dunluce with his bruises, as giving her a strong claim to be favourably heard. The prince replied to her request,

“ I consent to save him upon two conditions : namely, that he give up all claims to the hand of Ethne, and that he give young Fergus as a hostage for his living peaceably in his own territory, without disturbing the tranquillity of the kingdom.” •

O'Neil heard these conditions with sullen silence ; but he saw no way to avoid them, for he was surrounded on all sides by the warlike escort of the prince, and all hopes of escape were cut off. He looked in vain to the shore-

less ocean that stretched away to the north, and he bent his eye by turns on every cliff of Dunluce, and every point of the coast along his own domain, wishing to descry some friendly aid to assist him to escape, but he looked in vain.

“Do you agree or not?” said Malthuine impatiently; “I am in haste, and cannot wait to parley.”

The chief hesitated and seemed inclined to refuse. At length he said, “Spare me Fergus, and ask any other condition you please. I love the boy, and could not live if I were deprived of him.”

The truth was, however, that he depended much on the growing valour of Fergus, and intended to renew his efforts of ambition with all speed. But Malthuine was inflexible on this point, and he was right to be so. With all his haste and impatience, indeed, he was cool enough to foresee that it was the only thing which was likely to curb the turbulent spirit of the rebel chief from again embroiling the

peace of the kingdom, and he detested war, though none was braver than he when necessity brought him into the field.

“ And what is the consequence of my refusal to comply?” said O’Neil with some dignity.

“ Death,” replied the prince, “ immediate death.”

“ An’ weel, weel he deserves’t, though it war’ war,” said Jenny Grougar, who still looked fiercely at O’Neil. “ De’il be i’ my fingers, gin I winna gi’e you a helpin’ haun’ mysel’ tae rive him in coupins lith, lim’, an’ spawl. The heed’s o’er lang on the shouter’s o’ him a townont syne ; na, it wad be a tempin’ o’ Providence tae let him rin lows’ again, wyl’ an’ wud as he is ;” and so saying, she darted furiously at the chief, and seizing him by the hair, laid him in an instant weltering at her feet, for her movements came unexpectedly, and withal madness made her strength supernatural. When he was released from her desperate grasp, with the prospect of still

runder treatment from the prince's men, he had no alternative but comply with the proposed conditions, though he did so with a very bad grace. The prince would not release him, however, till Fergus had been put into his hands, but he was all impatience to impart the joyful news to his beloved Ethne, and, leaving him in charge of a strong party at Dunluce, he hurried away to the grove with all the speed with which love could drive him.

Angus was among those who accompanied him back, and while they were on the road the prince spoke to him in the following manner.

“Angus, my promise is sacred : you first found the rebel, and you shall have my sister's hand.”

The Caledonian knew not well what to say to this extraordinary occurrence. There was a time when the bare possibility of possessing Aoine would have driven him distracted with joy ; but he had long looked upon her as so far above him, that he would almost have

deemed it sacrilege to aspire to her hand. Besides, his love for the pretty Norah had now engrossed all his heart, and he could not in honour abandon her even for a princess.

“ It manna be, your highness,” returned the youth blushing, “ it’ll never do: an’ whun-a’bee it wasna me it fun’ him out, but daft Jenny, sae ye sud gi’e the princess tae her, gin ye’ll ha’e’t sae, an’ no tae me. No it I wad despise the gift, gude forgi’e me, but I’m nae match for sic a braw courtly leddy: an’ than, what wad the young prince o’ Connaught say, think we? It wad be nae sma’ matter it wud haud him frae joinin’ the Leinstrians, gin ye pit the princess by him, whun he’s sae out o’ the body about her: an’, gif I binna wrang, she’s no that ill pleas’t tae hear o’ his intentions.”

Malthuine himself was not ill-pleased to hear the Caledonian decline his offer with so good a grace, for his promise was certainly rash, and would have led to more disturbance than what he thought of when he made it.

“ Well, then,” said he, “ since you show good cause for your refusal, we must try to make it up to you some other way.” He be-thought him of giving Angus a respectable place at court, where he might be happy with his intended bride.

When the prince arrived at the grove with the happy tidings of Ethne’s release from her promise, he hurried with all the impatience of love to find her, and “ you are free,” were the only words he could give utterance to, while he folded her to his loving bosom. Their joy was so complete, that they forgot the loss which each had sustained in the death of a parent, and thought and felt only that they loved.

When the funeral ceremonies had been performed for the Arch-Druid, they prepared to return to Tara, to make arrangements for the marriage, which was now unopposed by any obstacle, except that it could not be immediately celebrated with decency on account of the general mourning for the king, as well as Ethne’s grief for the loss of her father.

The Druids of the grove were left disconsolate and unprotected, for O'Neil's troops had been so shattered in the night conflict that few of them returned. With some reluctance also, Ethne consented to the removal of the sacred parchments which had formerly cost her so much concern, as well as a collection of others of a similar description, but inferior value, to the number of three hundred, all of which were afterwards given up to Saint Patrick, who consigned them to the flames. It is to be regretted that they were not preserved, as, in all probability, along with magical and superstitious incantations, they contained what the Druids knew of philosophy and science, in some branches of which, particularly in natural philosophy, we know they were very skillful. But it was of importance to the success of the mission, that the most prompt and decisive measures should be pursued, and this was one of those which Saint Patrick had deemed indispensable to the extirpation of Druidism.

Some antiquaries have been disposed to question the burning of these parchments, and even their very existence. Toland asserted, on conjecture, that the Druids wrote only on beechen tables, and Vallency follows him, without adducing any satisfactory proof. But though Cæsar and Tacitus had been silent about their writings and learning, the very general tradition of the event in question is of more weight than the dreaming conjecture of antiquaries. Besides, the Druids had indirect communication with the Greeks as well as the Romans, since they used the Greek character in some of their writings. Now, we know that the oldest books at present preserved are of parchment, and they are of the very period under review, such as the Vatican Virgil, and the Florentine Terence; nay, parchment is mentioned by St Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, and earlier still, by Herodotus, under the name of *Δελφύνη*; and why may not the Druids have used it as well

as their southern contemporaries, with whom they had occasional intercourse ? *

When Logaire's funeral had been solemnized with all the splendour which the royal treasury could afford, an assembly of the chiefs was held to superintend the preparations for Malthuine's coronation. Here, however, an unexpected occurrence took place. Oilíoll Molt, a prince of the royal blood, who had been absent many years in Gaul, had the art to persuade the chiefs that he was the rightful heir, having been chosen heir-elect, as he pretended, by no less a person than Niall of the Nine Hostages, before Logaire himself, and that he had lost the last succession by his absence on the Continent, whither he had gone to improve himself in the art of war.

* Those who wish to see this farther discussed, may consult Montfaucon, *Antiq.* Tome III. 221, Dr Campbell's *Strictures on the History of Ireland*, and Dr Parsons' *Remains of Japhet*.

The consequence of which claim was, that part of the chiefs deserted Malthuine, and went over to Oilioll Molt, and a keen contest was carried on between the two rivals for several years. At length Oilioll Molt was defeated and slain, and Malthuine ascended the throne under the name of Lughaidh. He had found leisure, before this, to marry his faithful Ethne, and two lovers were never happier in their union. I need scarcely mention, that the ceremony was performed by Saint Patrick, who gave them his pastoral blessing with as much joy as if he had been about to usher them into paradise. Angus was at the same time united to Norah, and attended the prince afterwards in all his battles. The princess Aoine was also made happy by the young prince of Connaught; by which alliance Malthuine increased his military power, and overawed the spirit of rebellion still lurking in the kingdom of Leinster. At these happy marriage parties, old Camderoch played his best airs in his best manner, and was

warmly seconded therein by Bryan ; and Dranshogle told his most humorous jokes, and laughed at his own fears ; while O'Grushelan ferreted out of his stores the oldest and most generous liquors, to keep up the glad spirit of jocularity. Poor Jenny Grougar was so overjoyed at the humiliation of O'Neil, that she greatly recovered from her derangement, and was taken much care of by Ethne. O'Neil was so chagrined at his unsuccessful rebellion, that he kept quietly within his own territory while Fergus remained at Tara. Of the distinction this youth afterwards obtained in Scotland, there is not now room to speak, but should the present tale be thought by the public to have any interest, I have documents in my hands which could be easily thrown into a similar narrative, of his expedition to Scotland, his settlement in Kintyre, and his wars with the Picts.

Saint Patrick successfully pursued his missionary labours to a good old age, when he returned to Strathclyde, and died at Bal-na-

Glaseo. His body was first interred on the banks of Clyde, near Dunglass, but was afterwards removed to Downpatrick, in Ireland, by St Columba and the Monks of Iona.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page xxi, *add to the note*, " so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature"

38, line 17, *for indistinctly read instinctively*

166, line 14, *for awae read awal*

172, note, *for συσζεζουμιναι read συστρεζουμιναι*

VOL. II.

20, line 5, *for warning read waning*

228, line 9, *for was read were*

248, line 16, *for who read that*

266, line 18, *for hniuslin' read hnuislin'*

VOL. III.

27, note, *for any read my*

167 line 21, *for thought read thoughts*

216, note, *for ostrependo read obstrependo*

